DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 118 871 CE 006 417

TITLE The Myth and Reality of Aging in America.
INSTITUTION Harris (Louis) and Associates, Inc., New York, N.Y.; National Council on the Aging, Inc., Washington, D.C.
SPONS AGENCY Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, New York, N.Y.; Florence V. Burden Foundation, New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE Apr 75
NOTE 260p.; For excerpts from the report, see CE 006 418
AVAILABLE FROM The National Council on the Aging, Incorporated, 1828 "L" Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 (NCOA members $15.00; Non-members $20.00)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Ability; Attitudes; Cultural Images; Demography; Expectation; Experience; *National Surveys; Needs; *Older Adults; Productivity; Public Facilities; *Public Opinion; Public Policy; Retirement; *Self Concept; Senior Citizens; Social Responsibility; Social Welfare; *Statistical Studies; Stereotypes
IDENTIFIERS National Council on the Aging Inc., NCOA; Social Security

ABSTRACT

To understand and document the image and the reality of old age and older Americans, the National Council on the Aging (NCOA) commissioned the major, in-depth survey which examined public attitudes and expectations and documented older Americans' views and personal experiences. Consisting of statistical tables, textual analysis, and subjective discussions of implications, the report presents a major overview of the survey's findings in eight sections: (1) public attitudes toward old age, (2) public expectations of people over 65, (3) social and economic contribution of people 65 and over, (4) preparation for old age, (5) the experience of being older, (6) accessibility and use of community facilities by the public 65 and over, (7) the media and the image of people 65 and over, and (8) the politics of old age. The study found that most older Americans desire to and can be productive and that many millions live at or below the poverty line. Considered extremely significant, the findings related to public policy include these: Almost all americans believe social security payments should automatically rise with living costs; most agree that the Federal government should use general tax revenues for supporting older people, and oppose mandatory retirement at a fixed age. (Author/AJ)

Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original.

ED118871

THE MYTH AND REALITY

OF

AGING IN AMERICA

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL BY MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Mary Young

TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER.

Conducted for

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE AGING, INC.

by

LOUIS HARRIS AND ASSOCIATES, INC.

CE 006 417

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

2

April, 1975

© Copyright by The National Council on the Aging, Inc./1975
1828 L Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036

FOREWORD

This study is by far the most extensive ever conducted to determine the public's attitude toward aging and its perception of what it's like to be old in this country -- and to document older Americans' views and attitudes about themselves, and their personal experiences of old age.

The National Council on the Aging commissioned the study to provide definitive data to researchers, writers, students, legislators and the general public. For too long the people of this country have accepted without question all of the stereotypes and cliches about growing old. We hope the material that follows will separate the myth from the reality.

The study will also provide base data about the attitudes and perceptions of age for NCOA's newest project, the National Media Resource Center on the Aging; and it will be used with other data to evaluate the results of future programs.

Several points should be made about this data:

First, the conclusion is obvious that most of the older people of this country have the desire and the potential to be productive, contributing members of our society. They do not want to be "put on the shelf" and excluded from social and economic activities.

Second, it is clear from this data that most older people feel that their condition in life is better, economically and socially, than the general public believes it to be. But "most" can be a deceptive term; it is vitally important to remember that many millions of older people are living at, or below, the poverty line. Thus, when 15 per cent of people over 65 say that "not having enough money to live on" is a personal problem for them, that percentage translates to some three million needy people. The same thing is true of many of the other categories discussed in the pages that follow.

Third, the findings in the area of public policy are extremely significant. An overwhelming 97 per cent of the American people believe that social security payments to the elderly should automatically increase with rises in the cost of living. There is no indication that the public supports an arbitrary limitation on this increase.

The study also reveals that 81 per cent of the public agree that the federal government has the responsibility to use general tax revenues to help support older people. And 86 per cent of the people are opposed to mandatory retirement at a fixed age if the worker wants to continue working and is able to do a good job.

The conclusions and interpretations included in this volume are those of Louis Harris and Associates. Much more data will be made available in a variety of forms, including the views of leading specialists in the field of aging.

The National Council on the Aging is proud to make this study available in 1975 -- the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the organization. As president of NCOA, I want to express our appreciation to Louis Harris and Associates for all of their help in the project, to the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation for providing the major grant which made it possible, and to the Florence V. Burden Foundation for providing additional funds.

We also appreciate the valuable service performed by the Advisory Committee of researchers and specialists in the field of aging, chaired by Dr. Robert Havighurst in helping to focus the issues and questions posed in the study.

Albert J. Abrams
President
National Council on the Aging

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
FOREWORD	a
INTRODUCTION: Purpose and Methodology	i
The Substance of the Survey	ii
A Description of the Sample	v
A Demographic Profile of the Public 65 and Over	vi
Acknowledgements	viii
SECTION I: Public Attitudes Toward Old Age	1
The Best Years of a Person's Life	2
The Best Things About Being Over 65	7
The Worst Years of a Person's Life	12
The Worst Things About Being Over 65	18
The Age at Which the Average Man or Woman Becomes Old	22
Very Serious Problems Attributed to Old Age	29
SECTION II: Public Image of Most People Over 65	40
Older People Today Compared with 10 or 20 Years Ago	41
The Image of Most People Over 65	46
Activities of Older People	55
Image of Older People as Useful Members of their Community	61
The Young's Respect for People Over 65	65
SECTION III: Social and Economic Contributions of People Over 65	70
Functions Performed for Younger Family Members	73
Gainful Employment of People 65 and Over	82
Volunteer Work Among Public 65 and Over	94
Enrollment in Educational Institutions of Courses Among Public 65 and Over	106
SECTION IV: Preparation for Old Age	110
The Expectations Versus the Reality of Old Age	111
Steps to Prepare for Later Years	117
Things Would Have Done Differently to Prepare for Later Years	125

(continued)

TABLE OF CONTENTS
(continued)

	Page
SECTION V: The Experience of Being Older.....	128
Seriousness of Problems for People 65 and Over.....	130
Self-Image of the Public 65 and Over.....	145
Life Satisfaction of Public 65 and Over....	154
Social and Family Involvement of Public 65 and Over.....	164
SECTION VI: Accessibility and Use of Community Facilities by Public 65 and Over.....	173
Attendance at Various Events and Facilities.	174
Religious Involvement of Public 65 and Over.....	180
Present and Potential Interest in Senior Citizens Centers.....	182
SECTION VII: The Media's Portrayal of People Over 65.....	192
The Media's Portrayal of Older People.....	193
Present and Potential Role of the Media in Improving the Image of Older People...	203
SECTION VIII: The Politics of Old Age.....	210
Mandatory Retirement.....	211
Government Support of Retired People.....	222
How to Refer to People 65 and Over.....	227
Support for Older People: A Political Force.....	230
APPENDIX I: Demographic Information on Samples.....	233
APPENDIX II: Description of Sample Design.....	240
APPENDIX III: Weighting Scheme for the Study on Aging.....	243

INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

The social and economic opportunities available to any group in this society depend not only on their own resources, capabilities and aspirations but, as importantly, on the resources, capabilities and aspirations that the public at large attribute to them. Americans 65 and over are no exceptions. The potential contribution that older people can make to this country depends not only on their own self-confidence and belief in their own abilities and desire to remain active and useful members of society, but also on the confidence that the public at large places in them as contributing human beings.

For the purpose of understanding and documenting both the image and the reality of old age and older Americans, the National Council on the Aging, Inc., commissioned Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. to conduct a major, in-depth survey. The survey conducted in May, June and July of 1974, was funded by a substantial grant from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, with additional funds from the Florence V. Burden Foundation.

As an important part of the NCOA's program aimed at improving public understanding of the roles of Americans 65 and over, the survey had a two-fold purpose:

1. To examine the public's attitudes toward older Americans and their expectations of what it is like to be old in this country today, and
2. To document older Americans' views and expectations of themselves, and their personal experiences of old age.

The Substance of the Survey

The findings of this survey are presented in the following report in eight separate sections, each consisting of statistical tables, textual analysis of the tables, and "Observations" or subjective discussions of the implications of the data. In no way, however, does this report represent the total findings of the survey. Instead, it presents a major overview of the findings as they were analyzed by members of the Harris staff. The full findings have been turned over to the National Council on the Aging in the form of computer tabulations and a magnetic tape of the data.

The report is organized in the following way:

SECTION I: PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD OLD AGE: This first section examines the general attitudes of the public toward old age. What do the public consider to be the best years of a person's life and why, and what are the worst years? At what age is the average man or woman felt to become old? Is old age determined by chronological years or by other factors? What, if anything, do the public consider the advantages of being over 65, and what are the disadvantages? To what extent do the young and the old agree on these perceived advantages and disadvantages? What are the very serious problems that the public attribute to old age, and how do their perceptions agree with the actual experience of older people? Are there myths of aging that differ significantly from experience? Are any such myths of old age the property of the young alone, or have older people themselves adopted them as well?

SECTION II: PUBLIC EXPECTATION OF MOST PEOPLE OVER 65: The second section of the study probes the image that the public, young and old, hold of most people over 65. How do older people today compare with older people ten or twenty years ago in terms of financial status, educational background, health, and longevity? How are most people over 65 evaluated on a list of attributes typically associated with productive, active and effective

individuals? To what extent do the older public themselves identify with their contemporaries or do they instead consider themselves personally as exceptions? To what extent does the public perception of older people coincide with the way that the public 65 and over view themselves as individuals? A scale developed from the list of attributes on which older people were judged identified both the extent to which attitudes toward older people vary by key demographics, such as income, race, geographic location, etc., and which demographic groups can be considered prime targets for upgrading the understanding of the elderly. Attitudes toward the older population also involve the way the public feel most people over 65 spend their time. To what extent do the public credit older people with involvement in active, constructive activities and to what extent do they feel most older people are devoted to passive, sedentary pastimes? Once again, the survey determines the discrepancies between the public assumptions about older people and the testimony of older people themselves. Finally, Section II addresses the issue of mutual respect between the generations. Do older people feel they get enough respect from the young these days, and inversely, are the young satisfied with the respect they receive from their elders?

SECTION III: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION OF PEOPLE 65 AND OVER: The third section of the report deals not with attitudes toward older Americans but with the current involvement of older people in contributing functions in society -- and the potential contribution of older people in paid and voluntary capacities. At the outset, the section examines the extent to which older people contribute their time and energies on the family level, thus affording the young substantial monetary savings. Next, the section discusses current compensated employment of older people, and the number of currently unemployed or retired older people who would welcome the opportunity to work in a paid capacity. Thirdly, the section focuses on volunteerism among the public 65 and over: how many older people are currently doing volunteer work, and how many more would like to? Finally, it deals with educational enrollment among older citizens: how many are currently taking courses or enrolled in an educational institution, and what's preventing others from doing so?

SECTION IV: PREPARATION FOR OLD AGE: This fourth section of the study deals with the steps which the public consider important preparations for their later years, the extent to which older Americans have in fact taken these steps, and the extent to which they regret not having taken other steps in preparation for old age. The study answers the following questions: how do older people view their lives now compared to how they expected it to be when they were younger? In what ways are things better or worse for them than they had anticipated? In what ways do people feel they could have prepared better for this period of their life?

SECTION V: THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING OLDER: Section V recognizes that the public 65 and over are not a homogeneous group but rather a diverse sector of the population with different problems, self-images, and experiences depending on a host of demographic factors such as income, race, education, etc. This chapter examines the extent to which the serious problems of older people and their personal self-image vary among different subgroups, and determines the extent to which these problems are determined by age or rather by other demographic factors such as income or race. In addition, the survey looks into the overall life satisfaction of older Americans and compares them with the young on a life satisfaction scale. The degree of social and family contact is another indicator of the experience of being older and, once again, the experiences of those 65 and over are here compared with the young.

SECTION VI: ACCESSIBILITY AND USE OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES BY THE PUBLIC 65 AND OVER: In examining more closely the pastimes of older people, this sixth section of the report compares the regular activities of the public 65 and over with those of the younger public. A key measure of the activities of the public, both young and old, is the perceived convenience of a variety of facilities and places, ranging from the home of a relative to a library, a sports event, a restaurant, or a museum. This chapter of the report measures not only the convenience of these facilities but also the attendance of the older public at them in the last year or so. Special attention is given to their attendance at churches or synagogues over the last year or so, and the role that religion appears to play in the lives of older people. Furthermore, the report looks specifically at the present and potential interest of those 55 and over in attending senior citizens centers or golden age clubs.

SECTION VII: THE MEDIA AND THE IMAGE OF PEOPLE OVER 65: In this seventh section, the report looks at the public's attitudes toward the media's portrayal of older people. To what extent do people feel the media give a fair picture of what older people are like, or to what extent do they feel the picture portrayed by the media is a distorted one? Do television viewers feel that television treats older people with respect, or does television usually make older people look old-fashioned and narrow-minded, sick and helpless, or useless and in everyone's way? Do television watchers ever see older people in programs and commercials that they particularly look up to and admire, and who are they? What effect, if any, has television had on the public's attitudes toward older people and what effect might it have?

SECTION VIII: THE POLITICS OF OLD AGE: Finally, the last section of the report deals with some issues with political implications for older people. The first of these issues is mandatory retirement. What proportions of the working public can expect to face mandatory retirement? The survey measured public attitudes toward fixed retirement, and their feelings about discrimination against older people on the job. The second political issue discussed in this chapter is government support of retired people.

Who does the public feel should provide income for older people when they are no longer working? How much support is there among the public for cost of living escalators for social security payments? In addition, the survey recognized that groups, as they become politicized, often have some feelings about how they want to hear themselves referred to? What do the public 65 and over want to be called -- an older American? A golden ager? A senior citizen? A mature American? An old man or old woman? Finally, this last section of the report measures the potential political support for a movement to improve the status and conditions of people over 65. How many people feel there is a need for such a movement, and how many people can be counted on to join and participate in such a movement?

A Description of the Sample

Trained Harris interviewers conducted a total of 4,254 in-person household interviews for this study during the late spring and early summer of 1974. The sample included a representative cross-section of the American public 18 years of age and over, selected by random probability sampling techniques. Scientific sampling techniques guaranteed each household in the continental United States an equal chance of being drawn into the sample.

In addition to a cross-section of the public 18 years of age and over, an additional representative sample of the public 65 and over was surveyed in order to provide adequate numbers of older people for detailed analysis of the conditions and attitudes of this group. Similarly, an additional cross-section of people 55 to 64 years of age was drawn into the sample to allow an in-depth analysis of the group that is approaching retirement age. Finally, a cross-section of the public 65 and over would yield too few older blacks for a detailed look at their conditions and attitudes. For that reason, the sample design included an additional cross-section of blacks 65 and over. While the above-mentioned groups were sampled beyond their natural proportions in the U.S. population all subgroups were weighted back to their true pro-

portions for the purposes of analysis.

The following table shows the numbers of interviews conducted in each age group and their true proportion of the weighted sample:

DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

	Unweighted Number of interviews	Weighted Percentage
	#	%
Total	4254	100
18 to 64	1457	85
65 and over	2797	15
18 to 24	191	18
25 to 39	439	27
40 to 54	341	26
55 to 64	486	14
65 to 69	1033	5
70 to 79	1295	7
80 and over	469	3
White	2244	13
Black	479	1

A Demographic Profile of the Public 65 and Over

Before a discussion of the attitudes, conditions and understanding of the public 65 and over, it is important to understand who these older Americans are and how they compare demographically with the public 18 to 64.

The public 65 and over comprise 15% of the total adult population of this country, or approximately 21 million people. Compared with the remaining 85% of the public 18 to 64, they have a higher proportion

of women (59% of the older public is female, compared with 52% of the younger public), they have much lower household incomes (the median income for the older public is $4,800, compared with $12,400 for those 18 to 64), they are more white (90% of the older public is white, compared with 83% of those under 65), and they are far less well educated (63% of those 65 and over never graduated from high school, compared with only 26% of those 18 to 64). While like proportions of both groups are located in major metropolitan areas (counties A), the 65 and over group has a higher concentration than do the young in rural areas (counties D).

The following table illustrates the demographic characteristics of the older public compared with the younger public. The Appendix includes full definitions of all the subgroupings used for purposes of analysis throughout the report.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTIC OF PUBLIC

	Total Public %	Public 18 to 64 %	Public 65 and Over %
Men	47	48	41
Women	53	52	59
Under $3,000	8	6	23
$3,000 to $6,999	18	14	42
$7,000 to $14,999	41	43	25
$15,000 and over	32	36	8
Refused and unestimated	1	1	2
Median household income	$11,400	$12,400	$4,800
White	84	83	90
Black	10	10	8
Other	6	7	2
Some high school or less	32	26	63
High school grad; some college	54	59	30
College graduate	14	15	7
Northeast	26	26	29
East Central	15	15	15
West	16	16	16
South	29	29	28
Pacific	14	14	12
Counties A	36	36	37
Counties B	29	29	24
Counties C	24	25	20
Counties D	11	9	19

Acknowledgements

The following persons were instrumental in the conduct of this research:

1. **Merrell Clark, Vice President of the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, who offered his invaluable and generous assistance throughout the design of the study and its analysis, and his continuing encouragement and support.**

2. **Jack Ossofsky, Executive Director of the National Council on the Aging, Inc., who is responsible for the original idea of this research and who contributed his support and invaluable insights throughout the conduct of the study.**

3. John Skinner, Research Director of the National Council on the Aging, Inc., who coordinated the research between the NCOA and the Harris firm.

4. The Advisory Committee of the National Attitude Poll on Aging, appointed by the NCOA who counselled the Harris firm on the questionnaire design and the analysis of the data:

Orvill Brim, President, Foundation for Child Development
*Alvin David, former Assistant Commissioner for Program Planning and Evaluation, Social Security Administration
Earle Gerson, Chief of Demographic Survey, Bureau of the Census
*Robert Havighurst, Chairman of the Advisory Committee; Professor, Department of Education and Human Development, University of Chicago
Robert Hill, Director, National Urban League Research Department
*Maurice Jackson, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, University of California, Riverside
George Maddox, Director, Center for the Study of Aging, Duke University
Matilda Riley, Professor, Department of Sociology, Bowdoin College
*Harris Schrank, Director, Office of Social Research, The Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States
Ethel Shanas, Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Illinois at Chicago Circle
*Harold Sheppard, Staff Social Scientist, W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research
Gordon Streib, Professor, Department of Sociology, Cornell University

5. The following members of the staff of Louis Harris and Associates, Inc.:

Louis Harris, President, who supervised the entire study
Joseph Farrell, Executive Vice President, who served as Project Director of the research
Carolyn Setlow, Senior Vice President, who served as Chief Analyst and was responsible for the design of the questionnaire and the analysis of the data
Michael Edison, Executive Vice President, who assisted in the methodological design of the research
Victor Soland, statistician, who was responsible for the sample design and the computor tabulation of the data.

* Member of NCOA Board

SECTION I:

PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD OLD AGE

The Best Years of a Person's Life

Few people in this country today single out the later years as the most desirable period of one's life. While substantial numbers (69%) considered the teens, 20's and 30's as "the best years of a person's life", only 2% of the public felt that way about the 60's and less than 0.5% about the 70's. Among those who have reached the later years themselves (that is, the public 65 and over), fewer (46%) viewed the teens, 20's and 30's as the best years and a higher 8% considered the 60's and 70's as the optimal years:

Q.1a

THE BEST YEARS OF A PERSON'S LIFE

	Total Public %	18-64 %	65 and Over %
Teens	15	16	7
20's	31	33	17
30's	23	24	22
40's	14	13	17
50's	4	3	8
60's	2	1	6
70's	*	*	2
Other	1	1	2
Wouldn't choose any age (volunteered)	8	7	15
Not sure	2	2	4

*Less than 0.5%

In identifying the best years of life, those under 40 are most likely to indicate their own age range. Among those 18 to 24, for example, 24% chose the teen's and 46% the 20's as the best years of life. The public 40 and over, however, are much more likely to choose earlier years as the best year's than to choose their current age range.

Q.1a

THE BEST YEARS OF A PERSON'S LIFE

	Total Public %	18-24 %	25-39 %	40-54 %	55-64 %	65-69 %	70-79 %	80 and Over %
Teens	15	24	15	15	10	8	6	7
20's	31	46	37	26	20	18	16	15
30's	23	14	28	24	25	23	22	22
40's	14	5	7	22	18	18	16	17
50's	4	-	2	5	7	7	8	10
60's	2	-	2	1	2	6	6	5
70's	*	*	-	-	*	1	4	2
Other	1	2	1	*	2	1	2	3
Wouldn't choose any age (vol.)	8	6	5	7	14	13	16	16
Not sure	2	3	3	*	2	3	4	3

*Less than 0.5%.

In explaining why they considered the later years as the best years of a person's life, the public who chose them referred primarily to "retirement" (44%), followed by "not much responsibility and pressures" (21%), "you can enjoy, appreciate life more" (21%), and "your children are grown, on their own" (21%). Interestingly, the greatest appeals of youth are among the prime attractions of old age: not having much responsibility or pressures and being able to enjoy life.

In choosing the "best years of a person's life," many people surveyed referred to their own personal experiences, and older Americans were no exception:

> According to a 66-year-old, black retired skilled craftsman from Bridgeport, Connecticut, "The 60's are the best time because I'm not working. I get a chance to relax when I feel like it. I've worked hard for years and years, and now I can relax. The kids are grown and gone and it's great."
>
> A 78-year-old housewife from Minneapolis explained, "Part of your responsibilities are over with and you can relax. You no longer have to struggle with a large house or car payments or worry about fixing big meals for the whole family or big washes or lots of housework. It's a more relaxing time."
>
> A 78-year-old black, retired operative from Greensboro, North Carolina said, "I feel better than I ever felt in my life. I am close with God and He has helped me. I am not sick. I just feel good 'cause I can help people."
>
> In the words of a 77-year-old woman from Minneapolis, who works part-time as a service worker, "I've always liked the 70's. You don't have as much responsibility as when you're younger, you can take your time more. You can walk slower, read slower, and it just feels good to be able to take your time. You have a chance to think of all the things you've read and all the things you've done."
>
> "All my twelve kids are grown up and away from home," said a 66-year-old housewife from Great Falls, Montana. "No teenagers! I am enjoying myself, as I've got good health."
>
> An 83-year-old woman from Philadelphia looks back at her 60's as the best years of her life, "Because my husband

was living at that time and I had all my children home. It was a happy time of my life."

A 76-year-old housewife from Jacksonville, Florida felt the later years have been the best years "Because you understand how to live and have had enough experience to know how to live better."

Each period in life is valued for its own reasons. Those who selected the teen's as the best time of life saw them as a period of limited responsibility (66%), with time to enjoy life and have fun (28%). The 20's are also seen primarily as a time of limited responsibility (19%) and fun and enjoyment (19%), but also as a time to develop ambitions and to set goals (19%). While the 30's are characterized far less as a carefree time of life than the teen's and 20's, they are felt to have other attributes: the 30's are viewed as a time of greater wisdom, experience and maturity (30%), a time to enjoy family life (24%), a time to settle down (22%). The 40's and 50's are viewed similarly by those who chose each decade as the best time of life; they are primarily seen as a time when the children are grown and on their own, a time to enjoy the family, a time of stability and financial security, a time to enjoy the wisdom and experience of maturity. For those who singled out the 60's as the best years, the reasons were very different: retirement, lack of responsibility and pressures, freedom to enjoy life became the assets of the later years.

Observation:

Compared to earlier stages of life, the later years are clearly not felt by either the young or the old to be the most desirable time. Compared with those who chose the 30's and 40's, few people who chose the 60's think of them as a time to enjoy greater wisdom, maturity and experience, a time to enjoy or succeed at a job or career, or to enjoy one's family. Instead, those who

identified the later years as the prime of life associate that period with the advantages of youth -- a time of few responsibilities, problems and pressures, a time to withdraw from productive roles, to take it easy and enjoy life.

Q.1b

WHY YEARS CHOSEN ARE CONSIDERED "THE BEST YEARS OF A PERSON'S LIFE"

	Total Public	Teen's	20's	30's	40's	50's	60's	Wouldn't Choose Any Age (Volunteered)
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Not much responsibility, pressures, problems	19	66	19	3	7	11	21	1
Wiser, more mature, experienced, confident	16	2	15	30	19	18	11	2
Enjoy, appreciate life more; have fun, good times	15	28	18	12	12	8	21	3
Enjoy family, home life, marriage	14	1	15	24	14	14	6	5
Can do more, what you want to do; more active	12	11	16	10	13	18	8	2
More stable, settled, established	10	1	6	22	16	6	4	*
Have ambitions, goals to accomplish	10	6	19	12	6	2	6	1
Good, better health	9	4	10	13	7	16	6	5
Children grown,on their own	8	-	1	5	31	40	21	1
All ages are good; life is what you make of it	7	*	2	1	2	3	3	63
Able to get, enjoy, succeed at job, career	7	1	7	11	13	5	3	2
Financially secure, good stable income	7	*	3	10	19	18	6	*
Prime of life; best years	4	*	4	6	4	5	*	1
Independent, on your own	4	4	10	1	2	2	8	*
Easier, more leisurely, more comfortable, relaxing time of your life	3	2	1	2	7	9	15	*
More energy, strength, vigor	3	3	6	3	2	2	1	-
Have already achieved goals	2	*	*	3	6	3	3	*
Don't have to earn a living; supported by parents	2	9	1	-	-	-	-	-
Look forward, plan, save for old age	2	-	3	1	2	2	1	*
Retirement -- don't have to work; live on pension, etc.	2	-	*	1	3	7	44	1
Feel younger	2	3	5	1	1	*	-	*
Feel good, better; look forward to things emotionally	2	3	3	1	1	2	3	1
That's when you go to school	2	5	2	*	*	*	-	1
You're not too young, not too old	1	-	2	2	*	*	*	*
Chance to travel	1	*	1	*	1	5	6	*
Friends; being with people	1	1	1	*	*	1	1	1
Depends on individual circumstances	1	1	-	*	*	-	-	12
All life is hard, no best years	1	-	*	*	*	*	*	2
All other answers	3	1	4	5	2	4	3	-
Don't know	3	1	2	3	2	1	-	9

*Less than 0.5%

The Best Things About Being Over 65

While only one in every fifty people in this country would single out the later years as the best time of a person's life, the vast majority of the public were able to volunteer some positive aspects about growing older. In fact, only 16% of the public were unable to identify "the best things about being over 65 years of age." The rest of the public, both young and old, had some real ideas about the advantages of old age:

> In the words of an 18-year-old student in New Jersey "This is when you will have all your free time and, if you planned well, you will have enough money to live and travel."
>
> A 36-year-old housewife in New Hyde, New York explained what she feels are the best things about being over 65: "You have a different attitude then. You don't beat around the bush. You have seen more, you have experienced more. People don't pick on you. There is more to enjoy."
>
> According to a 48-year-old, Providence, Rhode Island housewife: "The best thing is Social Security benefits. Also, if you meet the right people, you can enjoy life. They want company and friends to talk to. You have more time to relax and enjoy the family."
>
> A 61-year-old, black unemployed operative in Hinston, North Carolina replied, "I haven't experienced it yet. Nowadays, they don't look their age. Some over 65 are more active than some 55, like my sister. They usually have less worries, since their families are grown. They can draw Social Security."

Those who have reached 65 explained what they feel are the advantages of their age:

> A retired farmer in Elk Grove, California explained, "You have, as a rule, more freedom to do what you wish. You are not tied down to a job. You have more freedom for leisure, to travel if you so choose. In a general category, you have more medical care provided for certain people. Medicare has certainly helped many people get the care they need."

In the words of an 88-year-old female retired service worker in Minneapolis: "You don't have to worry so much. Your children are raised so you don't have to worry about their food and clothing. Your wants are small. You don't care to go out much, and you don't eat much or buy many new clothes. These things aren't important anymore. You don't go where people see you, so you don't need new clothes."

A 73-year-old housewife in Louisville, Kentucky said, "Well, I think you keep yourself busy, especially if you are a widow. I think you enjoy your children and their children."

"I enjoy having the time to do my handiwork," said a 65-year-old female retired laborer in Denver. "I make things for my grandchildren and my daughter."

According to a 78-year-old, retired practical nurse in California. "Mostly, it's the help we get from the government. We have always looked after ourselves. I worked after my husband died at 66 until I had to quit work. The government is handling it better, so I can help my daughter with the rent."

"Well, you take myself, for example," responded a 68-year-old, male retired sales worker in Louisville. "My health is good and I don't have any worries of any kind. My retirement is fine, if you call it that. However, I'd like to have a part-time job where I could work two or three days a week."

To a 66-year-old housewife in Queens, New York, the best thing about being over 65 is "Getting closer with my husband again. The children are grown up and I have more time to spend with my husband."

According to both young and old nationwide, the best thing about being over 65 is "having more leisure," i.e., more free time to enjoy life, to do the things you've always wanted to do, to travel, and to enjoy your spouse and other friends. The 18 to 64 year old group mention leisure more often, however, than the 65 and over group who is experiencing it.

Following leisure, the public cites independence and freedom from responsibilities and pressures most frequently as the advantages of one's later years. Retirement is the third most frequently mentioned asset of old age, although the younger group volunteered retirement significantly more often than the older group who is retired:

Q.3a

THE BEST THINGS ABOUT BEING OVER 65 YEARS OF AGE
(Volunteered)

	Total Public	18-64	65 and Over	Men	Women
	%	%	%	%	%
More leisure time, free time	50	52	43	47	54
Independence, freedom from responsibility	33	33	31	24	37
Retirement, don't have to work	29	31	18	35	25
Financial support; security	24	23	22	23	24
Family; having children, grandchildren to enjoy	9	9	7	6	12
Being wiser, more experienced	5	5	4	5	6
Satisfaction with life	3	3	6	3	3
Security	1	1	1	1	*
Sense of accomplishment; able to look back over your life	1	1	1	1	2
Okay if financially independent, prepared for retirement	11	12	5	11	12
Okay if in good health	9	9	10	11	9
All other answers	4	4	6	4	4
Don't know; nothing	16	15	18	17	15

Observation:

The notion of leisure seems to have less relevance among older people than it does among the young. While leisure may be a meaningful way to refer to the limited amount of free time enjoyed by working people, it may have somewhat less meaning for older, retired persons with much more free time on their hands. It is worth noting, as well, that retirement has more appeal for the young than for the old.

While the young disagree somewhat with the old on the advantages of old age, the "best things about being over 65" vary even more dramatically by income, education and race. Both leisure time and independence have far greater appeal among those with incomes of $15,000 and over and the college educated than among those with incomes under $7,000 and those with some high school or less education. The results vary similarly by race: a full 54% of whites value leisure time as an asset of old age, compared with only 19% of blacks who felt that way. On the other hand, the under $7,000 group and blacks attach a far higher priority than do the more affluent and whites to the financial supports of old age, including Social Security, pensions, Medicare, etc.

Observation:

Lower income groups among both the young and the old recognize that, if shackled by serious financial problems, the old have a harder time enjoying the increased leisure and freedom from worries associated with old age. As a result the financial supports of Social Security, pensions, Medicare, etc. assume greater importance and attraction among the poor than among those better off financially, while increased leisure and freedom from pressures are perhaps less accessible and, as a result, less likely to be considered an asset of old age. Value attached to leisure time appears to increase with education; the college educated appear to place a much higher premium on the independence of old age and the freedom to pursue one's own interests than the less well educated.

Q.3a

THE BEST THINGS ABOUT BEING OVER 65 YEARS OF AGE
(Volunteered)

	Total Public	Under $7,000	$7,000 to $14,999	$15,000 and Over	Some High School or Less	High School Graduate Some College	College Grad	White	Black
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
More leisure time, free time	50	39	55	54	39	53	65	54	16
Independence, freedom from responsibility	33	21	30	46	23	34	46	36	13
Retirement, don't have to work	29	22	34	31	27	31	30	30	28
Financial support, security	24	29	26	17	28	22	20	22	39
Family; having children, grandchildren to enjoy	9	6	10	10	8	9	11	10	3
Being wiser, more experienced	5	6	5	6	2	6	9	5	6
Satisfaction with life	3	5	4	2	5	3	4	3	10
Security	1	*	1	*	1	*	*	1	1
Sense of accomplishment; able to look back over your life	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
Okay if financially independent, prepared for retirement	11	6	13	15	8	12	17	12	2
Okay if in good health	9	7	10	11	7	10	11	10	5
All other answers	4	4	2	6	5	3	6	4	4
Don't know, nothing	16	20	15	13	21	15	8	15	21

*Less than 0.5%

The Worst Years of a Person's Life

While only 2% of the public looked to the 60's and 70's as the best years of a person's life, most Americans do not identify them as the worst years. On the whole, the young and old agree here: 33% of those 18 to 64 named the 60's and 70's as the least desirable time of life, compared with a nearly identical 35% of those 65 and over.

Q.1c

THE WORST YEARS OF A PERSON'S LIFE

	Total Public %	18-64 %	65 and Over %
Teens	18	20	10
20's	6	5	7
30's	3	3	5
40's	3	3	3
50's	5	6	4
60's	13	12	14
70's	21	21	21
Other	6	6	7
Wouldn't choose any age (Volunteered)	18	17	22
Not sure	7	7	7

While substantial numbers of the young identified the 60's and 70's as the worst years of life, other periods are seen as problematic as well Second only to the 70's, the teen's are viewed as a difficult period, and particularly by those who have just left the teen's behind.

Q.1c

THE WORST YEARS OF A PERSON'S LIFE

	Total Public %	18-24 %	25-39 %	40-54 %	55-64 %	65-69 %	70-79 %	80 and Over %
Teens	18	17	25	17	15	12	9	8
20's	6	3	5	8	6	10	6	2
30's	3	2	2	4	3	5	5	6
40's	3	3	2	4	2	3	3	3
50's	5	5	4	6	10	4	3	3
60's	13	12	11	11	17	21	11	6
70's	21	28	23	18	14	12	28	24
Other	6	6	6	5	7	4	6	14
Wouldn't choose any age (vol.)	18	17	15	17	22	22	23	26
Not sure	7	7	7	10	4	7	6	8

Those who chose the 60's and 70's associated those years with some common drawbacks: "bad health, illness," "financial problems," and "not being able to get around, do much or be involved." In addition, those who indicated the 60's referred frequently to the difficulties of "getting work, having to retire," while those who chose the 70's were more concerned about "being lonely" and "being dependent, a burden."

People under 60 explained why they felt the 60's and 70's were the worst time of life:

> According to a 19-year-old woman in St. Clairsville, Ohio: "You start losing your health and people are no longer interested in your opinions or in any aspect of your life."
>
> "You're at the end of everything by then," said a 26-year-old woman from Batavia, New York. "You're retired and have nothing to do by then. You can't work, so you're bored with so much time on your hands."
>
> A 23-year-old unskilled laborer from Linesville, Pennsylvania, feels that "Everyone starts to leave you alone. You're not bothered with anymore. They just don't bother with you."
>
> A 35-year-old male clerical worker in Stockbridge, Massachusetts blamed it on retirement: "You have a hard time adjusting to retirement. It's just the idea of no longer working and having a hard time finding work."
>
> In the words of a 42-year-old housewife from La Grange, Illinois: "In observing others, it would be because they feel their life has no purpose anymore. They tend to dwell on themselves."
>
> "People are usually ill by that time," said a 58-year-old female service worker in Scranton, Pennsylvania, "and they're not attractive to look at either."

Those 60 and over who chose the 60's and 70's as the worst time of life gave their reasons as well:

According to a 61-year-old foreman from Garland, Texas: "You just don't have much to look forward to since the kids are gone. Kids are the most important things in the world to us."

A 69-year-old black retired farmer from Holly Hill, South Carolina explained, "You can't do anything you want to do much. Nobody fools with you much then. You don't have enough money to get what you need, not to mention what you want."

In the words of a 65-year-old housewife from Canetta, West Virginia: "Their health is just ruined by then. It's hard to do your housework, and you are too feeble to go out and have any fun."

"You're always sick," said a 65-year-old American Indian from Williamsport, Pennsylvania, "and have more bills than you can pay. You're hard of hearing, and that makes you uncomfortable to be around people."

A 77-year-old housewife from Duluth, Minnesota complained of the death of loved ones: "You lose your husband, you lose most of your family, like your brothers and sisters. Out of a family of nine, there are only two of us left now."

Just as those who valued each decade had their own particular reasons, those who considered the teen's, 20's, 30's 40's or 50's the worst periods had their reasons as well. Those who dismissed the teen's as the worst time of life referred to this decade primarily as a difficult, unsettled time (64%), a time when you're not mature yet and tend to overestimate your own wisdom (24%). The 20's are also seen as a difficult, unsettled time (46%), but also as a time of financial problems (24%), of difficulties in adjusting to married life (18%) and raising children (19%). The major drawbacks of the 30's are felt to be the responsibility for raising children (40%) and financial problems (30%). Those who designated the 40's or 50's as the worst time referred primarily to bad health and

aging, feeling older. In addition to bad health (40%), the 60's are felt by those who considered them the worst time to bring retirement and difficulty in finding jobs (31%) and financial problems (20%). Bad health (41%), loneliness (20%), and difficulty in getting around are felt to be the major drawbacks of the 70's.

Observation:

The absence of youth's major drawback -- the unsettling feeling of not knowing what to do with one's life -- can be seen as a major asset of both middle and old age. While the later years are felt to bring the financial insecurities of the 20's and 30's, the psychological uncertainties of youth are felt to be absent. Although not mentioned directly, this can be seen as one of the comparative advantages of old age.

Although retirement was considered the best thing about being in one's 60's, there are substantial numbers of people aware of the other side of the coin: the difficulty of finding work and the forced retirement of the 60's. In addition, those who single out the later years as the worst years attribute this to the bad health, financial problems, difficulty in getting around, and loneliness that they expect accompany old age. The testimony of older people themselves, to be explored in Section V of this study, will suggest, however, that these expectations of old age do not necessarily correspond with reality.

Q.1d

WHY YEARS CHOSEN ARE CONSIDERED "THE WORST YEARS OF A PERSON'S LIFE"

	Total Public	Chose							Wouldn't Choose Any Age (Vol.)
		Teen's	20's	30's	40's	50's	60's	70's	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Bad health, illness	22	1	2	1	31	41	40	41	12
Difficult, unsettled time; don't know what you want in life	17	64	46	3	3	4	2	1	2
Financial problems; limited income; high cost of living bills	10	2	24	30	4	5	20	15	2
Can't get work, hard to get job, must retire	9	2	7	4	*	14	31	10	1
Aging, feeling older; going downhill	9	2	*	3	21	27	18	13	3
Can't get around, do much, be involved	8	*	1	*	3	10	17	18	3
No worst age; any age can be good; is what you make it	8	1	-	*	*	*	*	*	38
Nothing to look forward to; fear for future	7	1	-	8	7	12	10	13	2
Lonely, alone	6	-	1	1	7	4	7	20	1
Not mature yet, over estimate own wisdom	5	24	12	-	2	-	*	*	-
Not as independent; feeling of being a burden, in the way; need to be cared for	5	*	2	-	-	1	4	12	1
Depends on individual circumstances; can't generalize	5	*	-	2	*	*	*	2	19
Restrictions, strict upbringing; not old enough to do things	4	17	*	-	1	-	*	1	-
Not as much energy, stamina, strength	4	*	3	-	6	6	8	8	*
Death of parent, spouse, relative	4	1	3	8	3	8	4	5	2
Feel unwanted, unneeded, shut out	3	1	-	-	*	1	6	6	-
Insecurities, anxieties, worries	3	4	7	6	8	5	7	2	1
No one willing, able to care for you	3	*	-	-	-	2	6	6	*
Family not with you, grown up	3	*	1	*	13	4	7	4	*
Responsibility for raising children	3	1	19	40	11	1	*	1	1
Difficulty adjusting to marriage	2	1	18	12	6	-	-	*	1
Have to work; responsibility for earning a living	2	1	6	12	2	6	1	*	*
Senility; deterioration of mental faculties, memory	2	1	-	-	-	1	2	4	1
Bad health makes any age bad	2	-	-	-	*	-	*	*	7
Get into trouble (e.g., crime, drugs)	1	5	*	-	-	-	*	*	*
Children, spouse, relative can become ill	1	-	*	*	2	*	*	1	1
Put in old age homes	1	-	-	-	*	2	*	2	*
All other answers	6	8	5	2	8	12	5	6	3
Don't know	5	1	*	*	*	-	*	*	17

*Less than 0.5%

The Worst Things About Being Over 65

While only one in three people singled out the 60's and 70's as the worst years of life, the public as a whole, with the exception of 6%, were able to describe what they consider "the worst things about being over 65 years of age."

Those under 65 explained what they expected the worst things about old age to be:

> A 30-year-old woman professional in Charlottesville, Virginia expressed her feelings about being over 65: "Perhaps loneliness is the worst thing. Facing the fact of the inevitable. I suppose death is around the corner."
>
> A 35-year-old, male clerical worker from Stockbridge, Massachusetts, said, "Probably health and, if you allow it, boredom. Those on limited incomes would be in stiff shape if they have only Social Security to live on."
>
> According to a 40-year-old housewife in New Hyde, New York, "Boredom is bad. Also maybe uselessness, no longer feeling productive. Most of all, the worst thing would be being a burden on their children."
>
> A 42-year-old manager in Florham Park, New Jersey felt the worst thing about being over 65 would be "if you do not have enough money to retire and have to continue working."
>
> "That's when your health starts to get bad," said a 59-year-old, unskilled laborer in Toledo, Ohio. "If one person passes away, the other has to be alone. Your friends have also passed away. As you get older, you don't have as many friends as when you were younger."
>
> In the words of a 61-year-old, black, unemployed laborer from Hinston, North Carolina, "Sometimes after 65, if you don't have good, dependable people to look after you, you'll be left alone and have to be sent to a rest home. No one wants to go to a rest home."

In describing the worst things about being over 65, others spoke from personal experience:

> A 73-year-old, retired craftsman from Budnapk, California complained, "The only thing with me was that I couldn't continue working. When I was 65, I could do as much work as I could at 35, but no one wanted me."

In the words of a 77-year-old, female, part-time unskilled worker in Howard City, Michigan, "I had my first operation and my first time in the hospital after I was 75. The worst thing was not being about to do as much. I wanted to work for Vista with the Indians, but my heart gave out."

A 73-year-old retired laborer from Waycross, Georgia put it this way, "the younger generation just doesn't care about the older generation. They have no respect and won't look after the older folks like it was when I was young."

"Financial problems are the worst thing," according to a 69-year-old housewife from Brattleboro, Vermont with an income of between $7,000 and $9,999 a year. "You save all your life and deprive yourself so that you'll have enough. But now with the prices, it's impossible."

According to a 74-year-old housewife in Louisville, Kentucky, "The worst thing is not having a husband to take you around. I guess I miss this more than anything else. Cabs are high and there are so many places you can't go alone. I don't like to ask people to take me places."

"I'm too old to work and too sick, and I don't have enough to live on," complained an 86-year-old, black, retired farmer in Dundee, Mississippi, with an annual income of less then $2,000. "I haven't bought a new suit in twenty years. I don't have enough to live."

When the responses were coded and tabulated, poor health came out far ahead of the other responses as the major drawback of old age, followed by loneliness, financial problems, lack of independence, being neglected or rejected by the young, and boredom. Yet, with the exception of poor health and forced retirement, those under 65, when compared with those 65 and over, overstated every problem:

Q.3b

THE WORST THINGS ABOUT BEING OVER 65 YEARS OF AGE
(Volunteered)

	Total Public %	18-64 %	50 and Over %	Men %	Women %
Poor health, physical condition	62	61	70	61	62
Loneliness	33	36	20	23	40
Financial problems	28	29	17	27	28
Lack of independence	16	16	15	15	16
Being neglected, rejected, not wanted, needed by young	13	15	5	12	14
Boredom	10	11	8	13	9
Fear of death	9	9	6	11	7
Forced retirement when you want, need to work	8	7	8	8	7
All other answers	5	5	7	6	4
Don't know, nothing	6	5	10	5	6

In identifying the worst things about being over 65, women mentioned loneliness far more than men did. With most women outliving their husbands, these results are not surprising.* The better educated have a greater fear of loneliness, financial problems, boredom and being neglected in old age than do the less well educated; these differences may be more related to age, however (the young are better educated than the elderly), than to education.

Observation:

That the younger public volunteered more negative aspects to being over 65 is an early suggestion that the young's perceptions of old age is perhaps worse than those 65 and over experience it. Findings throughout this report will further examine the possibility of such a discrepancy between the expectations of old age and the reality.

*A full 53% of women 65 and over said they were widowed, compared with only 15% of men.

Q.3b

THE WORST THINGS ABOUT BEING OVER 65 YEARS OF AGE
(Volunteered)

	Total Public %	Under $7,000 %	$7,000 to $14,999 %	$15,000 and Over %	Some High School or Less %	High School Graduate Some College %	College Grad %	White %	Black %
Poor health, physical condition	62	65	56	67	60	64	60	63	62
Loneliness	33	27	35	32	22	36	44	33	23
Financial problems	28	21	30	30	22	27	39	28	24
Lack of independence	16	17	17	13	17	15	13	15	23
Being neglected, rejected, not wanted, needed by young	13	12	13	15	7	15	18	14	10
Boredom	10	6	10	15	7	12	13	11	6
Fear of death	9	5	9	12	7	9	13	10	2
Forced retirement when you want, need to work	8	7	10	6	8	6	11	8	4
All other answers	5	6	4	6	6	5	5	5	5
Don't know, nothing	6	9	6	2	10	4	3	5	12

The Age at Which the Average Man or Woman Becomes Old

Is there some magical age at which people can expect to shed the label of middle-age and be considered old? About half of the American public say yes, that at some fixed age the average man or average woman becomes old. In fact, 5% of the public feel that the average man reaches old age before he turns 50, while a total of 16% feel old age arrives before the average man's sixtieth birthday. While some may argue that women age faster than men, or vice versa, most people do not feel this way. Seventeen percent of the public feel that women become old before they're 60, compared with a like 16% who feel that way about men.

While half of the public feel that a man or woman becomes old at a predetermined age, the remaining half feel that old age depends on varying circumstances, including retirement, poor health, etc.:

Q.2a,2c

AGE AT WHICH THE AVERAGE MAN AND THE AVERAGE WOMAN BECOME OLD

	Average Man	Average Woman
	%	%
Under 40 years	1	1
40 - 49 years	4	5
50 - 59 years	11	11
60 - 64 years	12	10
65 - 69 years	11	8
70 - 74 years	10	9
75 - 79 years	3	3
80 years and over	1	2
Never	2	2
It depends	22	23
When he/she stops working	4	2
When his/her health fails	11	13
When she can't have babies anymore; menopause	-	2
Other	3	3
Not sure	5	6

Notions of the age at which the average man or woman becomes old do not vary substantially by the age of the public. While those under 65 are slightly more likely than those 65 and over to feel that the average man becomes old before he turns 65 (29%, compared with 21%), differences between the two age groups in their responses here are minimal.

Q.2a

AGE AT WHICH THE AVERAGE MAN AND WOMAN BECOME OLD

	The Average Man			The Average Woman		
	Total Public	18-64	65 and Over	Total Public	18-64	65 and Over
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Under 40 years	1	1	*	1	1	1
40 - 49 years	4	5	2	5	5	3
50 - 59 years	11	11	8	11	11	8
60 - 64 years	12	12	11	10	11	8
65 - 69 years	11	10	11	8	8	8
70 - 74 years	10	10	8	9	10	7
75 - 79 years	3	3	3	3	3	4
80 years and over	1	1	4	2	1	2
Never	2	2	3	2	2	5
It depends	22	23	23	23	24	23
When he/she stops working	4	4	4	2	2	2
When his/her health fails	11	11	13	13	12	16
When she can't have babies anymore, menopause	-	-	-	2	2	1
Other	3	3	2	3	3	2
Not sure	5	4	8	6	5	10

*Less than 0.5%

Observation:

It is worth noting that only about half of the public have in mind a chronological, numerical concept of old age. Nearly as many use functional criteria for old age, related to employment status, health, etc.

It is often said that staying busy and active keeps a person young, and this notion will be explored later in this report. It can safely be said at this point in the report, however, that staying active and involved keeps a person's image young. The portion of the public who expressed in a later question the feeling that most people over 65 are <u>very useful</u> members of their community (see page 64) were less likely to expect a person to become old before the sixty-fifth birthday than were those who felt that older people are <u>not useful</u>: only 24% of those who value the usefulness of the elderly felt the average woman becomes old before she turns 65, compared with a higher 40% of those who feel that people over 65 are useless to the community.

Q.2a,2b/18c

AGE AT WHICH THE AVERAGE MAN AND WOMAN BECOME OLD

	The Average Man		The Average Woman	
	Feel Most People Over 65 Are Very Useful Members of Their Community (23%)	Feel Most People Over 65 Are Not Useful Members of Their Community at All (8%)	Feel Most People Over 65 Are Very Useful Members of Their Community (23%)	Feel Most People Over 65 Are Not Useful Members of Their Community at All (8%)
	%	%	%	%
Under 65 years	26	36	24	40
65 years and over	22	26	19	22
Never	4	1	4	2
It depends	22	22	24	21
When he/she stops working	4	1	3	1
When his/her health fails	14	7	14	7
When she can't have babies anymore; menopause	-	-	3	2
Other	3	1	2	2
Not sure	5	6	7	4

While half of the public feel that the average man or woman becomes old at a fixed age, they too attribute old age to certain conditions apart from chronology. The primary reason for feeling that the average man or woman gets old at some fixed age, regardless of what that age is, is physical changes, followed by the state of mind of feeling old, retirement, just reaching a turning point in life, and family and social changes. Family and social changes are considered more responsible for old age among women than among men, while retirement is felt to age men more often than women:

Q.2b,d

REASONS WHY THE AVERAGE MAN AND WOMAN GET OLD AT (AGE GIVEN)
(Base: Gave definite age at which the average man/woman gets old)

	The Average Man (Base: 53%) %	The Average Woman (Base: 49%) %
Physical changes; the body becomes old	70	77
State of mind; feels old	26	21
Retirement; no job advancement	24	7
(Age given) is a turning point	15	10
Family and social changes	*	14
Financial troubles, worries about money	1	1
Acts and thinks old; set in ways	2	*
Assumes more responsibility; settles down	1	1
Men age faster than women	1	6
Women age faster than men	*	1
Not everyone that age is old; I know some exceptions	6	5
All other reasons	5	4
Don't know	2	2

*Less than 0.5%

Observation:

Physical changes, including getting sick, slowing down, wearing out, and showing the visible signs of age such as wrinkles and gray hair, are considered by the public as the principal causes of old age. In other words, the public casts the blame for old age far more on the body of the older man or woman than on society's treatment of its older citizens. Nonetheless, substantial minorities feel that old age is caused by retirement, feelings of uselessness, and isolation from children who have grown up and moved away. The role that society plays in aging people by rendering them useless and isolated will be examined throughout this study.

The reasons volunteered for why a man or woman becomes old at a certain age vary according to the age given. While physical changes is the primary reason for why the average man gets old at all age ranges 40 and over, it is associated more with the ages of 70 and over than with the ages 40 to 69. Inversely, the state of mind of growing older was volunteered more frequently by those who felt the average man became old under 70 than by those who felt old age came at the age of 70 or over. Second only to physical changes, retirement was held responsible for old age by those who chose 60 to 64 or 65 to 69 as the age at which the average man becomes old.

Q.2b

REASONS WHY THE AVERAGE MAN GETS OLD AT (AGE GIVEN)
(Base: Gave definate age at which the average man gets old)

	Total Who Gave Definite Age (53%)	Gave Under 40 Years (1%)	Gave 40-49 Years (4%)	Gave 50-59 Years (11%)	Gave 60-64 Years (12%)	Gave 65-69 Years (11%)	Gave 70-79 Years (13%)	Gave 80 Years or Older (1%)
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Physical changes; body becomes old	**70**	**16**	**74**	**70**	**60**	**61**	**88**	**86**
Less active; slowing down; can't get around like used to do; tires easily	32	15	39	34	31	22	37	42
His health fails; body starts to wear out; aches and pains	21	1	19	15	16	25	30	27
Mind not as agile, alert; becomes senile	5	-	4	4	2	2	11	7
Unable to work like he used to; it's too hard for him	5	-	2	6	5	7	5	3
Worn out from hard work, responsibilities	5	-	7	8	5	3	5	7
Loses sexual ability, desire; change of life	2	*	3	3	1	2	*	-
State of mind; man feels old	**26**	**24**	**31**	**26**	**27**	**37**	**18**	**19**
Psychologically old; feels old; worries about aging, dying	7	18	16	10	6	8	3	4
Loses interest in life; doesn't want to do things anymore	7	-	2	5	7	11	7	8
Feels useless, worthless, lost; nothing to do	5	-	*	2	7	12	3	3
Worries about his appearance, sexual attractiveness, turning grey, bald, etc.	4	1	12	5	4	3	2	-
Feels lonely, bad; emotional problems; can't enjoy life	3	5	1	4	3	3	3	4
Retirement; no job advancement	**24**	**-**	**9**	**14**	**36**	**45**	**13**	**3**
Retirement ages him, changes his lifestyle; misses daily routine, friends from work	20	-	1	9	28	43	12	3
Worries about approaching retirement	3	-	3	4	6	1	1	-
Can't advance on his job; too old to get good position	1	-	5	1	2	1	*	-
It's a turning point	**15**	**17**	**15**	**13**	**9**	**14**	**22**	**10**
It's a turning point; when a man reaches that age, he's old	11	-	9	8	8	10	19	9
Downhill from then on; over the hill	4	17	6	5	1	4	3	1
Behavior; acts or thinks old; set in his way, rigid	**2**	**12**	**2**	**2**	**1**	*****	*****	**-**
Financial troubles; worries about money	**1**	**-**	**-**	*****	**2**	**1**	**1**	**-**
Assumes more responsibility; settles down; life stops being carefree	**1**	**48**	*****	**2**	**-**	*****	**-**	**-**
Family and social changes	*****	**-**	**-**	**1**	**1**	*****	*****	**-**
Friends, relatives, wife dies	*	-	-	-	1	*	*	-
Children grown up, married; have grandchildren	*	-	-	1	-	*	*	-
Men age faster than women	**1**	**-**	**-**	**1**	**1**	**2**	*****	**-**
Men age slower than women	*****	**-**	**-**	**1**	**1**	*****	*****	**3**
Not everyone that age is old; know some who are exceptions, active, healthy, young at heart	**6**	**-**	**2**	**6**	**6**	**4**	**10**	**11**
All other answers	**5**	**2**	**12**	**7**	**2**	**5**	**3**	**2**
Don't know	**2**	**-**	**1**	**1**	**3**	**3**	**2**	**2**

REASONS WHY THE AVERAGE WOMAN GETS OLD AT (AGE GIVEN)
(Base: Gave definate age at which the average woman gets old)

	Total Who Gave Definate Age (49%)	Gave Under 40 Years (1%)	Gave 40-49 Years (5%)	Gave 50-59 Years (11%)	Gave 60-64 Years (10%)	Gave 65-69 Years (8%)	Gave 70-79 Years (12%)	Gave 80 Years Or Older (2%)
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Physical changes; body becomes old	77	72	79	92	20	61	77	87
Less active; slowing down; can't get around like used to do; tires easily	26	12	14	25	24	22	37	24
Her health fails; body starts to wear out; aches and pains	20	*	6	12	24	23	24	39
Looks older, less attractive (e.g., wrinkles, grey hair)	11	35	29	18	10	2	2	4
Worn out from hard work, responsibilities of children, household	7	16	7	15	6	4	5	4
Menopause, change of life; can't have babies anymore	6	9	20	13	3	2	1	*
Mind not as agile, alert; becomes senile	4	-	3	4	1	2	6	15
Unable to work like she used to; it's too hard for her	3	-	*	5	2	6	2	1
State of mind, woman feels old	21	36	20	20	23	30	16	23
Psychologically old; feels old; worries about aging, dying	7	25	9	8	8	6	5	3
Loses interest in life; doesn't want to do anything anymore	5	7	3	3	4	9	4	9
Feels lonely, bad; emotional problems; can't enjoy life	5	4	4	6	3	10	3	10
Feels useless, worthless, lost; nothing to do	4	-	4	3	8	5	4	1
Family and social changes	14	-	23	13	11	19	14	3
Children, family have grown up, moved away; don't need her anymore	11	-	23	12	9	17	8	-
Husband, friends are dead	3	-	-	1	2	2	6	3
It's a turning point	10	18	9	7	11	8	12	13
It's a turning point; when a woman reaches that age, she becomes old	8	2	4	6	8	7	11	13
Downhill from then on; over the hill	2	16	5	1	3	1	1	-
Retirement; working woman stops working; changes her lifestyle	7	-	2	5	12	11	5	*
Financial troubles; worries about money	1	-	-	*	1	1	1	-
Assumes more responsibility; becomes tied to house and family, life stops being carefree	1	1	1	2	-	1	*	-
Behavior; acts or thinks old; set in her way, unable to adjust	*	*	*	*	*	-	-	-
Women age slower than men; don't work as hard; care for themselves better	6	-	-	3	5	8	12	9
Women live longer than men	1	-	2	*	1	1	1	3
Women age faster than men	1	*	*	2	3	1	*	-
Not everyone that age is old; know some who are exceptions, still active, healthy, young at heart	5	1	*	4	4	5	6	20
All other reasons	4	4	10	3	5	4	1	1
Don't know	2	5	*	1	4	4	1	5

Very Serious Problems Attributed to Old Age

Foremost on people's minds, when they described the worst things about being old, were poor health, loneliness, financial problems, lack of independence, being neglected or unwanted, and boredom.

That these problems, and a host of others, do indeed exist for many older Americans was substantiated by the survey of people 65 and over (and Section V of this report will explore them in depth). When shown a list of possible problems and asked how serious each was for them personally, 23% of the public 65 and over said that "fear of crime" was a very serious problem for them personally (and an additional 24% called it a somewhat serious problem), 21% considered "poor health" a very serious problem for themselves (and another 29% a somewhat serious problem), 15% "not having enough money to live on," 12% considered "loneliness" a very serious problem, 10% "not enough medical care", 8% "not enough education," 7% "not feeling needed," 6% "not enough to do to keep busy," 5% "not enough friends," 5% "not enough job opportunities," 4% "poor housing" and 3% "not enough clothing." As Section V of this report will reveal, all these problems are serious ones for significant minorities of older people, and especially serious for certain demographic groups among older people.

The reality is, therefore, that substantial numbers of the older public do say they suffer very or somewhat seriously from the problems discussed above. In addition to measuring the experience of old age, however, a major purpose of this survey was to measure the expectations of old age, that is, what the public (young and old) think life is like for "most people over 65." A comparison between the problems attributed to "most people over 65" by the public at large and the problems actually experienced personally by older people themselves indicates the extent to which the American public

have an accurate or a distorted view of what it is like to grow old. In most cases, the discrepancy is enormous:

-- While 23% of older people said that "fear of crime" was a very serious problem for them personally, a full 50% of the public felt that "fear of crime" was a very serious problem for most people over 65.

-- While 21% of those 65 and over said "poor health" was a very serious problem for them personally, a much higher 51% of the public attributed "poor health" as a very serious problem to most people over 65.

-- While 15% of the older public feel "not having enough money to live on " is very serious for them, four times that many (a full 62% of the public) assumed that a shortage of funds was a very serious problem for "most people over 65."

-- Twelve percent of those 65 and over did feel that "loneliness" was a very serious problem for them personally, but a much higher 60% of the public considered "loneliness" to be a very serious problem for most people over 65.

-- Ten percent of older Americans said that "not enough medical care" was a very serious problem for them personally, but a higher 44% of the public felt that inadequate medical care was a very serious problem for most people over 65.

-- While 8% of those 65 and over complained of "not enough education," 20% of the public expect this to be a very serious problem for most people over 65.

-- Seven percent of the public 65 and over claimed that "not feeling needed" was a very serious problem for them, while nearly eight times that many (54% of the public) felt that this is a very serious problem for most people over 65.

These discrepancies between the experience of old age and the public's expectations of old age continue right down the line of problems, with major differences between the serious problems experienced by the older public and those attributed to them:

Q.6a,b(7)

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE VERSUS PUBLIC EXPECTATION:
"VERY SERIOUS" PROBLEMS OF PUBLIC 65 AND OVER COMPARED WITH
"VERY SERIOUS" PROBLEMS ATTRIBUTED TO "MOST PEOPLE OVER 65"
BY TOTAL PUBLIC

	Personal Experience "Very Serious" Problems Experienced by Public 65 and Over %	Public Expectation "Very Serious" Problems Attributed to "Most People Over 65" By Total Public %	Net Difference
Fear of crime	23	50	+27
Poor health	21	51	+30
Not having enough money to live on	15	62	+47
Loneliness	12	60	+48
Not enough medical care	10	44	+34
Not enough education	8	20	+12
Not feeling needed	7	54	+47
Not enough to do to keep busy	6	37	+31
Not enough friends	5	28	+23
Not enough job opportunities	5	45	+40
Poor housing	4	35	+31
Not enough clothing	3	16	+13

In interpreting these findings, some may suggest that older people might have been reluctant to identify personal problems as very serious and instead called them somewhat serious. Yet, even if one were to compare the proportion of older people who say that a certain problem is either very or somewhat serious with the proportion of the public who expect that same problem to be very serious for most people over 65, the discrepancies between the experience of older people and public expectations of old age continue to exist in most areas.

C.6a,b(8)

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE VERSUS PUBLIC EXPECTATION:
"VERY SERIOUS" OR "SOMEWHAT SERIOUS" PROBLEMS
OF PUBLIC 65 AND OVER COMPARED WITH "VERY SERIOUS"
PROBLEMS ATTRIBUTED TO "MOST PEOPLE OVER 65" BY TOTAL PUBLIC

	Personal Experience	Expectation	
	"Very Serious" or "Somewhat Serious" Problems of Public 65 and Over %	"Very Serious" Problems Attributed to "Most People Over 65" %	Net Difference
Poor health	50	51	+ 1
Fear of crime	47	50	+ 3
Not having enough money to live on	40	62	+22
Loneliness	29	60	+31
Not enough medical care	23	44	+21
Not enough education	25	20	- 5
Not feeling needed	19	50	+31
Not enough to do to keep busy	17	37	+20
Not enough friends	16	28	+12
Not enough job opportunities	12	45	+33
Poor housing	11	35	+24
Not enough clothing	8	16	+ 8

-- While 29% of the older public consider "loneliness" a very or somewhat serious problem for them personally, a full 60% of the public of all ages expect "loneliness" to be a very serious problem for most older people.

-- Similarly, while 40% of those 65 and older say "not having enough money to live on" is a problem (very or somewhat serious) for them personally, a higher 62% of the public at large expect this to be a very serious problem for most people over 65.

Observation:

The table on page 31, comparing those people 65 and over who identify problems as very serious for them personally with those proportions of the public who expect these problems to be very serious for most other people, represents a real and accurate measure of the gap between experience and expectation. Yet even when the analysis goes a step further and includes, on the experience side, those older people who labeled the problems very or somewhat serious for them personally, there still remain, in most areas, considerable differences between the actual experience of older people and the problems attributed to them by the public at large.

In another area, that of mobility, older people are often portrayed as having some serious difficulties as well. In addition to those problems discussed above, the survey explored the seriousness of various obstacles that older people may confront in getting where they want to go.

Once again, substantial minorities complained that there were some very serious problems which limited their mobility: 24% said that the "danger of being robbed or attacked on the street" was a very serious problem for them

personally, while 22% felt the same about "the difficulty in walking and climbing stairs," 20% about "their general health," 15% "no buses or subway available for where they want to go," 14% "not having a car or being able to drive" and 9% "the cost of buses and subways."

Critical to the independence and involvement of older people, these problems are not to be overlooked. The extent to which they affect certain groups among the elderly more seriously than others will also be explored in Section V of this report. Once again, however, even greater than the reality of the problems is the mythology of the problems old age is felt to bring. Substantial differences exist once again between the very serious problems that older people personally attest to and the problems that the public expect "most people over 65 to suffer."

— While 24% of those 65 and over say that "the danger of being robbed or attacked on the street" is a very serious problem for them personally, nearly twice that many (46% of the total public) feel that this danger would be a very serious problem for most people over 65.

— "Difficulty in walking and climbing stairs" is indeed a very serious problem for 22% of older people, but a higher 44% of the total public feel that this is a very serious problem for most people over 65.

Again, these differences between experience and expectation emerge consistently on all the problems that might make it difficult for older people to get where they want to go:

Q.17b

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE VERSUS PUBLIC EXPECTATION:
"VERY SERIOUS" PROBLEMS OF PUBLIC 65 AND OVER IN GETTING
WHERE THEY WANT TO GO COMPARED WITH "VERY SERIOUS" PROBLEMS
ATTRIBUTED TO "MOST PEOPLE OVER 65" BY TOTAL PUBLIC

	Personal Experience "Very Serious" Problems Experienced by Public 65 and Over %	Public Expectation "Very Serious" Problems Attributed to "Most People Over 65" By Total Public %	Net Difference
Danger of being robbed or attacked on the street	24	46	+22
Difficulty in walking and climbing stairs	22	44	+22
Your general health	20	41	+21
No buses or subways available for where you want to go	15	39	+24
Not having a car or being able to drive	14	38	+24
The cost of buses and subways	9	33	+24

Most striking in the findings is the fact that the public 18 to 64 and the public 65 and over do not disagree substantially in their evaluation of the problems of "most people over 65." While many of those 65 and over do not consider these problems very serious for themselves personally, like the young, they nonetheless attribute them as very serious problems to "most people over 65."

-- While only 15% of the public 65 and over said "not having enough money to live on" was a very serious problem for themselves personally, for example, a full 59% of the public 65 and over felt that "most people over 65" suffered from a very serious shortage of money.

-- while 12% of the public 65 and over felt "loneliness" was a very serious problem for themselves personally, a higher 56% of the older public felt that loneliness was a very serious problem for "most people over 65."

The public 65 and over tend somewhat less than those 18 to 64 to see "not feeling needed" and "not enough job opportunities" as very serious problems for "most people over 65." On the whole, however, despite what they say about themselves, the public 65 and over attribute the same serious problems to most older people as do the public under 65.

Q.6a,b(8)

"VERY SERIOUS" PROBLEMS ATTRIBUTED TO "MOST PEOPLE OVER 65" BY PUBLIC 18-64 AND PUBLIC 65 AND OVER

"Very Serious" Problems Felt Personally by Public 65 and Over		"Very Serious" Problems Attributed to Most People Over 65		
		By Public 18-64	By Public 65 and Over	Net Difference
%		%	%	
15	Not having enough money to live on	63	59	-4
12	Loneliness	61	56	-5
7	Not feeling needed	56	40	-16
23	Fear of crime	50	51	+1
21	Poor health	50	53	+3
5	Not enough job opportunities	47	32	-15
10	Not enough medical care	45	36	-9
6	Not enough to do to keep busy	38	33	-5
4	Poor housing	35	34	-1
5	Not enough friends	28	26	-2
8	Not enough education	19	25	+6
3	Not enough clothing	16	17	+1

While Section V of this report will look closely at the impact of various demographics, such as income, education, race and age, on the problems suffered by the public, it is appropriate to raise here a key question: In terms of these personal problems discussed above, how different are the experiences of those 65 and over from those of the younger public?

Those 18 to 64 were asked the very same question asked of those 65 and over: "How serious is each of these problems for you personally -- a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or hardly a problem at all for you personally?" With only a few exceptions, the responses of the younger and older publics were nearly identical:

Q.6a,b(6)

"VERY SERIOUS" PROBLEMS FOR PUBLIC 65 AND OVER PERSONALLY COMPARED WITH PUBLIC 18 TO 64

	Total Public		
	18-64	65 and Over	Net Difference
	%	%	
Not having enough money to live on	18	15	- 3
Fear of crime	15	23	+ 8
Not enough job opportunities	11	5	- 6
Poor health	10	21	+11
Not enough medical care	9	10	+ 1
Not enough education	7	8	+ 1
Poor housing	7	4	- 3
Loneliness	7	12	+ 5
Not feeling needed	5	7	+ 2
Not enough friends	4	5	+ 1
Not enough to do to keep busy	4	6	+ 2
Not enough clothing	4	3	- 1

Observation:

Putting myths aside, the personal testimony shows that the problems of older people, except for health and fear of crime, are comparable to those of younger people. The message that emerges here, therefore, is that the older public, like the young, have bought the negative images of old age. They apparently assume that life is really tough for most people over 65 and that they are merely exceptions to the rule.

Concluding Observation:

From all the above findings, one can conclude that, while serious problems of not enough money, fear of crime, poor health, loneliness, inadequate medical care, and getting where they want to go do indeed exist among certain minorities of older people, they are by no means as all pervasive as the public thinks. Nor should having a problem be confused with being a problem.

Such generalizations about the elderly as an economically and socially deprived group can do the old a disservice, for they confront older people with a society who sees them merely as a problem and not as part of the solution to any of society's problems. Such problems as the public perceive among the elderly can only generate a sense of guilt and pity among the young, and not a sense of appreciation for the talents and energies that older people can still contribute to society. As a result, older people are not likely to find themselves the recipients of opportunities to pitch in and help solve the problems that affect our society as a whole. As a group for whom there is little social and economic demand, the older population also may loose self-esteem with deleterious effects.

An exclusive emphasis on the problems of old age can do the young a disservice as well. Portraits of the elderly as economically and socially deprived and in desperate need of help from all sides might tempt the young to turn their heads away from the elderly, these reminders of what life will be like for them too some day, and to focus their attention instead on a youth-oriented society. In turning away from the old, they would deprive themselves of the contributions that older Americans can make to themselves and to society as a whole. They would ignore a large and useful human resource.

Negative portrayals of old age can do the young another disservice as well. Exaggerations of the problems of old age might instill in the young a deep-seated fear of growing old. They might force the young to struggle to look and act "young," thus inhibiting maturity and preventing the young from enjoying the natural and rewarding process of aging. They may cause fears of aging that inhibit normal, rational planning for their later years.

SECTION II:

PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS OF MOST PEOPLE OVER 65

Older People Today Compared With 10 or 20 Years Ago

In the eyes of the public, older Americans today represent a more independent and resourceful group than did older Americans ten or twenty years ago. As a group, people over 65 are seen as a healthier, better educated, better off financially, and larger segment of the population today than they were in the 1950's or 1960's. Furthermore, the public recognizes that older people today can expect to enjoy greater longevity than older people in the past, and according to a majority of the public surveyed, are more likely now than they were then to live out that longer life in their own homes.

Q.2f

STATEMENTS ABOUT MOST PEOPLE OVER 65 TODAY
COMPARED WITH 10 OR 20 YEARS AGO

	Total Public		
	Agree %	Disagree %	Not Sure %
Older people today are generally better educated than older people were then	88	7	5
People live longer today than they did then	82	15	3
There are more older people living alone today than there were then	73	15	12
Older people today are healthier than older people were then	69	21	10
Older people today are worse off financially than older people were then	40	52	8
Older people make up a smaller part of the population today than they did then	29	64	7

With only one exception, the 18 to 64 group and the 65 and over group agreed in comparable numbers with the above statements. While majorities of both groups disagree that the financial status of the elderly is worse today than ten or twenty years ago, those 65 and over disagreed (by 58 to 31%) in greater numbers than did those under 65 (who disagreed by 51 to 41%).

Q.2f

STATEMENTS ABOUT MOST PEOPLE OVER 65 TODAY
COMPARED WITH 10 OR 20 YEARS AGO
(Agree's Only)

	Total Public %	18-64 %	65 and Over %
Older people today are generally better educated than older people were then	88	88	88
People live longer today than they did then	82	82	84
There are more older people living alone today than there were then	73	72	79
Older people today are healthier than older people were then	69	69	70
Older people today are worse off financially than older people were then	40	41	31
Older people make up a smaller part of the population today than they did then	29	30	25

Older people's view of the economic conditions of their peers as a group is clearly influenced by their own economic status. Among the public 65 and over, those with incomes under $3,000 reject the notion that older

people are worse off financially today by a slimmer margin (49 to 40%) than do those with incomes of $15,000 and over (69 to 21%).

Q.2f #4(1)

"OLDER PEOPLE TODAY ARE WORSE OFF FINANCIALLY THAN OLDER PEOPLE WERE THEN"

	Public 65 and Over				
	Total	Under $3,000	$3,000 to $6,999	$7,000 to $14,999	$15,000 and Over
	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	31	40	29	23	21
Disagree	58	49	60	67	69
Not sure	11	11	11	10	10

Yet among the public at large, age is a more important variable here than income. The public with incomes under $7,000 rejects this same statement in proportions comparable to the public with incomes $15,000 and over. Among those with incomes of less than $7,000 a year, however, the public 18 to 54 agrees that older people are worse off financially today, while the public 65 and over rejects this notion.

Q.2f #4(2)

"OLDER PEOPLE TODAY ARE WORSE OFF FINANCIALLY THAN OLDER PEOPLE WERE THEN"

	Total Public			Public Under $7,000		
	Under $7,000 %	$7,000 to $14,999 %	$15,000 and Over %	18-54 %	55-65 %	65 and Over %
Agree	42	39	40	50	37	33
Disagree	48	53	53	39	54	56
Not sure	10	8	7	11	9	11

Those with some high school education or less are much less likely than the college educated to feel that people live longer today than they did ten or twenty years ago, and that older people today are healthier than they were then. (Only 71% of the less well educated agreed that people live longer today, compared with 96% of the better educated.) Similarly, agreement with both statements is significantly lower among blacks than it is among whites. (Only 58% of blacks agree to greater longevity today, compared with 85% of whites.) The large margins between whites and blacks on both counts reflect in part the educational differences of the two groups, but may also reflect that the black elderly do in fact report more serious health problems than do the whites (see Section V) and that whites do in fact average longer lifetimes than do blacks.

Q.2f

STATEMENTS ABOUT MOST PEOPLE OVER 65 TODAY
COMPARED WITH 10 OR 20 YEARS AGO
(Agree Only)

	Total Public %	Some High School or Less %	High School Grad/Some College %	College Grad %	White %	Black %
Older people today are generally better educated than older people were then	88	85	88	90	89	79
People live longer today than they did then	82	71	85	96	85	58
There are more older people living alone today than there were then	73	76	72	71	74	76
Older people today are healthier than older people were then	69	62	72	75	71	57
Older people today are worse off financially than older people were then	40	39	39	43	39	41
Older people make up a smaller part of the population today than they did then	29	38	26	16	27	39

Observation:

As a group, the 65 and over population is felt to have improved its status and conditions over the last decade or two. Not only do the public appear to recognize that the elderly represent one of the most rapidly growing minorities in this country today; in addition, they feel that in terms of their educational, physical and

financial status, the elderly are a more independent and resourceful segment of the population. With three in four people agreeing that more older people are living alone today the phenomenon of the nuclear family, which has moved many older parents out of their children's homes and into their own, is also understood by the public at large.

Both young and old agree that the older population is in better financial shape today than ten or twenty years ago. Yet older people at all income levels are more likely than the young to feel that the public over 65 have become better off financially in the last two decades, and as a result represent less of an economic burden on society than they may have in the past. Such knowledge on the part of the young might help substantially to ease their consciences about the elderly.

The Image of Most People Over 65

The status of older people as a group may indeed be felt to have improved substantially over the last decade or two. Yet as Section I revealed, the picture drawn in the public's mind of old age and its problems is a gross distortion of what older people say they experience personally. Furthermore, the expectations of old age and older people do not consist merely in the public's evaluation of the economic and social conditions of the elderly. As important, they involve the public's view of older people themselves both as human beings and as contributing members of society.

When judged on a list of attributes usually associated with productive, active and effective individuals, "most people over 65" received very high ratings from the public on two counts only: 74% of the public felt that most people over 65 are "very warm and friendly," and 64% considered them "very wise from experience." Seen as nice old folks who have benefited from the trials and tribulations of life, most people over 65 are not viewed, however, as very active, efficient or alert people: less

than half (41%) considered them "very physically active," while only 35% said they are "very good at getting things done," 29% "very bright and alert," 21% "very open-minded and adaptable," and 5% "very sexually active."

Q.4b

TOTAL PUBLIC'S VIEW OF "MOST PEOPLE OVER 65"

	Total Public			
	Very	Somewhat	Hardly at All	Not Sure
	%	%	%	%
Friendly and warm	74	24	1	1
Wise from experience	64	30	3	3
Physically active	41	46	11	2
Good at getting things done	35	53	10	2
Bright and alert	29	55	14	2
Open-minded and adaptable	21	49	26	4
Sexually active	5	28	35	32

Once again, however, it is not only the young who reveal negative perceptions of "most people over 65." The public 65 and older themselves have also bought the stereotypes of older people as unalert, closed-minded, unproductive members of society; although the public 65 and over tend to see most people over 65 as somewhat more open-minded and adaptable than those 18 to 64 give them credit for being.

On only one count do the younger public and older public diverge dramatically in their evaluation of "most people over 65." While 82% of those 18 to 64 felt that most people over 65 are "very warm and friendly," only 25% of the public 65 and over felt that their contemporaries as a group are "very warm and friendly."

IMAGE OF "MOST PEOPLE OVER 65" HELD BY PUBLIC 18 TO 64, COMPARED WITH PUBLIC 65 AND OVER

	Image of "Most People Over 65" Held by Public 18 to 64	Image of "Most People Over 65" Held by Public 65 and Over	Net Difference
	%	%	
Very friendly and warm	82	25	-57
Very wise from experience	66	56	-10
Very bright and alert	29	33	+ 4
Very open-minded and adaptable	19	34	+15
Very good at getting things done	35	38	+ 3
Very physically active	41	43	+ 2
Very sexually active	5	6	+ 1

Observation:

The older public itself proves once again to be only slightly more generous toward its peers than the young. And in one area they are far more critical: they are far less likely to consider their contemporaries to be warm and friendly human beings than are the young. Again the evidence is clear that those 65 and over themselves are usually only slightly better spokesmen for the older public than are the young -- and that they are sometimes much worse. But, after all, the 65 and over group were young once and are likely to have acquired these attitudes toward the elderly during earlier stages of their lives.

No single trait discussed above serves exclusively as the basis by which individuals are judged as potentially productive and useful members of society. In fact, in evaluating someone as a valuable employee, a helpful neighbor or even a contributing family member, one normally looks for a combination of the above attributes (with the exception perhaps of sexual activity). For that reason, an image scale was designed on the basis of

the key attributes (excluding "sexually active") on which the public rated "most people over 65." The scale was developed in order to identify which segments of the public had relatively positive images of older Americans and which had relatively negative ones.

The scale was developed according to the following procedure: for each "very" response, a score of two points was given; for each "somewhat" or "not sure" response, a score of one point was given; and for each "hardly at all" response, a score of zero was given. The image scale based on the six items ranged, therefore, from 0 to 12, and median scores were calculated for each demographic group surveyed.

The median score for the public at large was 9.9 The only age group with a median score on the "Image of Most People Over 65 Scale" significantly lower than that of the total public were people 18 to 24 years old (9.2). It can be concluded, furthermore, that the image of older people is lowest among the young, that it peaks among those 40 to 64, and that it declines again among those 65 and over.

0.4

MEDIAN SCORES ON IMAGE OF "MOST PEOPLE OVER 65" SCALE (BY AGE)

	Median Score
Total Public	9.9
18 to 64	9.9
65 and over	10.0
18 to 24	9.2
25 to 39	9.8
40 to 54	10.3
55 to 64	10.3
65 to 69	10.2
70 to 79	10.0
80 and over	9.5

While the overall image of most people over 65 does not vary significantly by sex, income appears to be a variable with some significance. The image of older people is significantly more negative among the lower income groups than among the more affluent: the median for the public with incomes under $7,000 is 9.7 compared with a higher 10.1 for people with incomes of $15,000 and over.

There appear to be no other significant patterns by other demographic cuts, such as education, race or geographical region.

Q.4

MEDIAN SCORES ON IMAGE OF "MOST PEOPLE OVER 65" SCALE

	Median Score
Total Public	**9.9**
Men	9.9
Women	10.0
Under $7,000	9.7
$7,000 to $14,999	10.0
$15,000 and over	10.1
Some high school or less	9.9
High school grad/some college	10.0
College graduate	9.6
White	9.9
Black	9.7
Northeast	10.0
East Central	10.0
West Central	9.7
South	9.9
Pacific	10.0
Counties A	9.9
Counties B	9.8
Counties C	10.2
Counties D	9.8
Public 18 to 64 with responsibility for hiring and firing	10.0

An additional score was calculated for those younger people who will be among the most influential in terms of society's ability to make good use of its senior citizens as economic and social resources: the 21% of people 18 to 64 (or 18% of the total public) who said that they have on their job, responsibility for hiring and firing people. This group (10.0) had a view of most people over 65 comparable to that of the public at large (9.9).

That income, and not race, is a significant variable in affecting the general view of older people is supported by other findings. Blacks with incomes under $2,000 had a median score of only 7.4, far lower than the score of 10.1 among blacks with incomes of $4,000 and over. Yet at the same income level ($3,000 to $6,999), there is no significant difference between the median score of whites (10.0) and blacks (9.8).

Q.4

MEDIAN SCORES ON IMAGE OF "MOST PEOPLE OVER 65" SCALE
(INCOME WITHIN RACE)

	Median Score
Total blacks 65 and over	9.7
Under $2,000	7.4
$2,000 to $3,999	8.7
$4,000 and over	10.1
Public 65 and over with incomes $3,000 to $6,999	
White	10.0
Black	9.8

Observation:

By and large, the image that the public hold of most people over 65 varies only slightly from one demographic group to the next. Age appears to be the most significant determinant of attitude, with the youngest group of adult Americans harboring the most negative attitudes toward the oldest. Income appears to have some affect on attitudes toward the over 65 group, with the more affluent registering somewhat more positive feelings toward the old than the less affluent.

On the whole, it must be concluded, however, that the differences among demographic groups are minimal. This suggests that, if an effort is made to reinforce positive images of the elderly and combat negative ones through the media, it would be necessary to rely on those media that reach the broadest segments of the public, rather than concentrate efforts on media that reach specific demographic groups.

While the public at large may question the efficiency, mental alertness and flexibility of the older population, the public 65 and over, however, do not question their own as individuals:

-- Although only 29% of the total public (young and old) felt that most people over 65 are "very bright and alert," a much higher 68% of those 65 and over felt that they personally were "very bright and alert."

-- While only 21% of the public considered most people over 65 "very open-minded and adaptable," a higher 63% of the older public felt this way about themselves as individuals.

-- Only 35% of the public felt most people over 65 are "very good at getting things done," compared with a much higher 55% of the older people who considered themselves efficient.

As might be expected, the self-image of the public 65 and over is more positive among certain groups than it is among others, just as certain groups of young people tend to feel better about themselves than others, (Secion V of this report will explore in-depth the self-images of various subgroups among older people). Nevertheless, it is safe to conclude here that the public image of most older people is far more negative than the view that the public 65 and over hold of themselves as individuals.

Q.4a,b(2)

SELF-IMAGE OF PUBLIC 65 AND OVER
COMPARED WITH TOTAL PUBLIC'S IMAGE OF "MOST PEOPLE OVER 65"

	Self-Image of Public 65 and Over	Total Public's Image of "Most People Over 65"	Net Difference
	%	%	%
Very friendly and warm	72	74	+ 2
Very wise from experience	69	64	- 5
Very bright and alert	68	29	-39
Very open-minded and adaptable	63	21	-42
Very good at getting things done	55	35	-20
Very physically active	48	41	- 7
Very sexually active	11	5	- 6

Observation:

As open-minded, adaptable, bright and alert people, most people 65 and over see themselves as exceptions to the rule. Despite their own positive self-appraisals, the older public does not differ much from the younger public in their evaluation of most of their contemporaries. "While I personally am very bright and alert," most people 65 and over seem to be saying, "most of my peers simply are not."

A striking finding in this study is the fact that age does not appear to influence significantly the way individuals tend to view themselves:

-- The public 65 and over tend to see themselves as less physically active and less sexually active than do those under 65. The public's view of their physical activity appears to remain constant from age 18 to age 64, however and drops noticeably only after age 65. Sexually, however, activity appears to peak from age 25 to 39 and decline gradually thereafter, according to the testimony of those surveyed.

-- On the other hand, the public 65 and over tends to see itself as somewhat more friendly and warm than those under 65, and as wiser from experience. The public's view of themselves in both these areas tends to increase continually with age.

Q.4a,b(1b)

SELF-IMAGE OF PUBLIC 65 AND OVER COMPARED WITH PUBLIC 18 to 64

	Self-Image of Public 18-64 %	Self-Image of Public 65 and Over %	Net Difference %
Very bright and alert	73	68	-5
Very open-minded and adaptable	67	63	-4
Very physically active	65	48	-17
Very friendly and warm	63	72	+9
Very good at getting things done	60	55	-5
Very wise from experience	54	69	+15
Very sexually active	47	11	-36

Observation:

On the whole, the public 65 and over sees itself as being as bright and alert, as open-minded and adaptable, and as good at getting things done as the public 18 to 64. The message the older public is delivering here is that our mental capacities have not deteriorated and we have additional wisdom from our life's experiences to boot. While the public at large may vastly underestimate the effectiveness, the open-mindedness, and the alertness of most people over 65, the older public themselves have as much confidence in their own abilities as do the young and a whole lot more confidence in themselves than the public has in them.

Activities of Older People

An important ingredient in the overall image of older people is public perceptions of how most people over 65 spend their time. To the extent that older people are felt to spend their time engaged in constructive, contributing activities, it is safe to assume, the public views them as active, involved members of the community. To the extent that they are felt to spend their time at retiring, sedentary activities, however, the public views them as worn-out, passive members of society.

At the outset, the public 65 and over were asked how in fact they spend their time. The most popular activity among the older public was "socializing with friends" (47% of the older public said they spend "a lot of time" at this activity), followed by "gardening or raising plants" (39%), "reading" (36%), "watching television" (36%), "sitting and thinking" (31%), "caring for younger or older members of the family" (27%), "participating in recreational activities and hobbies" (26%) and "going for walks" (25%). Needless to say, participation in all these activities varies among older people according to age, income, etc. Section V of this report will examine these variations in depth.

The interesting finding is, however, that the older public seems no more or no less likely to spend "a lot of time" on most of the pastimes tested than those under 65. Comparable numbers of the old and the young, for example, said that they spend a lot of time "sleeping," "reading," "sitting and thinking," "participating in fraternal or community organizations," "going for walks," etc. In three areas, those under 65 are much more likely than the older public to spend a lot of time: in caring for younger or older members of the family, in working part time or full time, and in participating in sports. The public 65 and older, on the other hand, is more likely to spend a lot of time watching television than is the younger public. But, apart from these four areas, the involvement of the young and the old in the activities mentioned was nearly comparable.

Q.5b(2)

"A LOT OF TIME" PERSONALLY SPENT DOING VARIOUS ACTIVITIES
BY PUBLIC 65 AND OVER COMPARED WITH PUBLIC 18 TO 64

	18-64 %	65 and Over %	Net Difference
Socializing with friends	55	47	-8
Caring for younger or older members of the family	53	27	-26
Working part-time or full-time	51	10	-41
Reading	38	36	-2
Sitting and thinking	37	31	-6
Gardening or raising plants	34	39	+5
Participating in recreational activities and hobbies	34	26	-8
Watching television	23	36	+13
Going for walks	22	25	+3
Participating in sports, like golf, tennis or swimming	22	3	-19
Sleeping	15	16	+1
Participating in fraternal or community organizations or clubs	13	17	+4
Just doing nothing	9	15	+6
Doing volunteer work	8	8	-
Participating in political activities	5	6	+1

As has been seen throughout this report, however, public perceptions of the older population are very different from the way older people personally see themselves. In terms of how they spent their time, the

public at large are far more likely to credit most people over 65 with spending their time at passive, sedentary activities than the older public say they actually do:

-- While 36% of the older public say that they spend "a lot of time" watching television, a higher 67% of the total public expect that most people over 65 do. The fourth most popular activity mentioned by the older public, it was judged to be their number one pastime.

-- While 31% of those 65 and over say they spend "a lot of time" sitting and thinking, twice that many (62% of the public at large) expect that this is how most people over 65 spend a lot of time. Their fifth most common activity according to older people surveyed, it was considered the second most frequent pastime by the total public.

-- Only 16% of the older public say that they personally spend "a lot of time" sleeping compared with a much higher 39% of the public who expect them to. According to the testimony of older people, sleeping is their tenth most time-consuming activity, although the public at large expects it to be their fourth.

-- Similarly, while only 15% of the 65 plus group say they spend "a lot of time" just doing nothing, a higher 35% of the public think this is how most people over 65 spend a lot of time.

On most other activities, however, the public at large appear to have a fairly realistic appraisal of the amount of time spent by most people over 65.

Q.5b(3)

PUBLIC 65 AND OVER WHO SPEND "A LOT OF TIME" DOING VARIOUS ACTIVITIES COMPARED WITH TOTAL PUBLIC WHO THINK "MOST PEOPLE OVER 65" SPEND "A LOT OF TIME" AT THESE ACTIVITIES

	Public 65 and Over Who Spend "A Lot of Time" Personally		Total Public Who Think "Most People Over 65" Spend "A Lot of Time"		Net Difference
	Rank	%	Rank	%	
Socializing with friends	(1)	47	(3)	52	+ 5
Gardening or raising plants	(2)	39	(5)	45	+ 6
Reading	(3)	36	(6)	43	+ 7
Watching television	(4)	36	(1)	67	+31
Sitting and thinking	(5)	31	(2)	62	+31
Caring for younger or older members of the family	(6)	27	(11)	23	- 4
Participating in recreational activities and hobbies	(7)	26	(9)	28	+ 2
Going for walks	(8)	25	(8)	34	+ 9
Participating in fraternal or community organizations or clubs	(9)	17	(10)	26	+ 9
Sleeping	(10)	16	(4)	39	+23
Just doing nothing	(11)	15	(7)	35	+20
Working part-time or full-time	(12)	10	(14)	5	- 5
Doing volunteer work	(13)	8	(12)	15	+ 7
Participating in political activities	(14)	6	(13)	9	- 3
Participating in sports, like golf, tennis or swimming	(15)	3	(15)	5	+ 2

While the public 65 and over were far less likely than those 18 to 65 to exaggerate the amount of time most people over 65 spend at sitting and thinking, sleeping and just doing nothing, the older public are still

more likely to attribute to most older people sedentary pastimes than they say they personally are involved in themselves. On most other activities, the public 65 and over tend to feel that most of their contemporaries spend about as much time as they personally do:

Q.5b(4)

PUBLIC WHO THINK "MOST PEOPLE OVER 65" SPEND "A LOT OF TIME" DOING VARIOUS ACTIVITIES:
(Public 18 to 64, Compared with Public 65 and Over)

	Public 18 to 64 Who Think "Most People Over 65" Spend "A Lot of Time" %	Public 65 and Over Who Think "Most People Over 65" Spend "A Lot of Time" %	Net Difference
Watching television	68	64	- 4
Sitting and thinking	66	42	-24
Socializing with friends	53	42	-11
Gardening or raising plants	47	34	-13
Reading	45	33	-12
Sleeping	42	25	-17
Just doing nothing	37	27	-10
Going for walks	35	24	-11
Participating in recreational activities and hobibes	28	24	- 4
Participating in fraternal or community organizations or clubs	26	22	- 4
Caring for younger or older members of the family	24	21	- 3
Doing volunteer work	15	10	- 5
Participating in political activities	9	10	+ 1
Working part-time or full-time	5	6	+ 1
Participating in sports, like golf, tennis or swimming	5	5	-

Observation:

The above measure of the amount of time spent at various activities must be seen as a subjective and relative measure. To begin with, what may seem to one person like "a lot of time" to spend at a given activity may seem like "hardly any time at all" to another. Furthermore, "a lot of time" spent gardening may be in no way comparable to "a lot of time" spent watching television. For this reason, the above results should not be interpreted as absolute measures of how much time older people spend at various activities. Instead, they are valuable as indications of the kinds of activities that people see themselves involved in, and the degree of involvement. It is a significant finding therefore that larger proportions of the public at large (and the young even more than the old) attribute to most older people greater involvement in sedentary, private and isolated activities than the older public attest to personally. It is no wonder that the public at large considered "not enough to do to keep busy" a serious problem of older people, although those 65 and over deny this is a problem.

Image of Older People as Useful Members of Their Community

In the minds of the public, being a useful member of one's community involves, primarily, taking part in community activities, organizations and politics and helping or serving others:

Q.18a

WHAT MAKES SOMEONE A USEFUL MEMBER OF HIS OR HER COMMUNITY
(Volunteered)

	Total Public	Public 18-64	Public 65 and Over
	%	%	%
Taking part in community activities, politics, organizations	55	55	43
Taking part in community activities	33	35	23
Being active in government, politics; voting, being informed	12	12	10
Belonging to a church, social or fraternal organization	10	10	10
Helping, serving others	47	46	50
Helping, serving others	37	36	40
Doing volunteer, charity work (e.g., visiting shut-ins, elderly)	10	10	10
Being a good neighbor, citizen	33	32	34
Being friendly, a good, neighbor	18	17	25
Obeying laws	9	9	5
Keeping one's property, home clean	6	6	4
Working, paying your bills; being self-supporting	9	9	6
Being a good Christian, going to church	4	4	5
Minding their own business	4	4	4
Being happy; having a good outlook on life	3	3	3
Being healthy	1	1	1
Raising your children right, to be decent	1	1	1
All other answers	4	4	3
Don't know	5	4	10

The public 65 and over have a relatively high self-image in terms of being useful members of their community: 40% of them consider themselves personally to be "very useful members of their community," while 39% said "somewhat useful members" and 17% "not useful members at all." The self-image in this area held by the public 65 and over is, in fact, more positive than that held by the public 18-64: while 40% of the older group considered themselves to be "very useful members of their community," only 29% of the younger group felt that way about themselves. Yet the younger public's view of their elders is even lower than their self-evaluation. While only 29% of those 18 to 64 saw themselves personally as "very useful" to their community, an even lower 21% of this younger group considered "most people over 65" to be "very useful."

Q.18b,c

SELF-IMAGE OF PUBLIC AS USEFUL MEMBERS OF THEIR COMMUNITY
COMPARED WITH IMAGE OF "MOST PEOPLE OVER 65"

	Self-Image		Image of "Most People Over 65	
	Public 18-64	Public 65 and Over	Public 18-64	Public 65 and Over
	%	%	%	%
Very useful members of own community	29	40	21	32
Somewhat useful members of own community	55	39	65	54
Not useful members of own community at all	13	17	8	7
Not sure	3	4	6	7

In evaluating the perceived usefulness of most people over 65 as members of their community, age appears to be the key variable, with age 65 the turning point. The following table shows the above findings according to finer age breaks. Only 14% of those 55 to 64 felt that most people over 65 were very useful to their community, compared with 34% of those 65 to 69. Variations by other demographics are minimal and not significant. As shown earlier in the study, people responsible for hiring and firing are similar to the public at large: 22% of them hold a positive image of older people in this respect, compared with 23% of the public at large.

Q.18c

IMAGE OF "MOST PEOPLE OVER 65" AS USEFUL MEMBERS OF THEIR COMMUNITY

	Positive Image ("Very Useful") %	Neutral Image ("Somewhat Useful" / "Not Sure") %	Negative Image "Not Useful at All") %
Total Public	23	69	8
18-64	21	71	8
65 and over	32	61	7
18-24	20	70	10
25-39	21	70	9
40-54	23	72	6
55-64	24	69	7
65-69	34	59	7
70-79	31	62	7
80 and over	25	66	9
Public 18-64 responsible for hiring and firing	22	67	11

Observation:

It is striking that only small proportions of the public at large judge themselves as useful members of their community. These results may reflect a growing alienation on the part of the public, as documented in a number of Harris surveys, and a certain cynicism about the extent to which individuals can hope to effectively change things going on around them.

That older people tend to see themselves as more useful to their community than younger people see themselves needs some explanation. The criterion of usefulness to the community appears to be more meaningful to older people than to younger. This is perhaps because the young relate more concretely to their families and their places of employment than to the community at large. Those 65 and over, however, deprived of many of their responsibilities to their families and their jobs, need to find their satisfaction and sense of usefulness in their involvement in the community at large. With their sense of being useful increasingly dependent on their involvement in their community, and with usefulness defined by those 65 and over primarily as helping or serving others and involvement in community activities, the elderly attach greater importance to this role. The extent to which the older public are currently involved in volunteer work in their community, and the extent to which other older people would like to be, is examined in Section III of this report.

The Young's Respect for People Over 65

Subject to a variety of negative perceptions and expectations on the part of the young, it is not surprising that a substantial proportion of those 65 and over feel they get from the young less respect than they deserve. Forty-five percent of those 65 and over felt that people over 65 get "too little respect" from younger people these days.

The public under 65 is more aware of a respect problem than is the older public itself: a full 72% of the public 18 to 64 feel that people over 65 get "too little respect" from younger people these days.

Q.15a

WHETHER PEOPLE OVER 65 GET RIGHT AMOUNT OF RESPECT FROM YOUNGER PEOPLE THESE DAYS

	Public 18-64 %	Public 65 and Over %
People over 65 get too much respect	1	1
People over 65 get too little respect	71	44
People over 65 get just about the right amount of respect	21	39
It depends (volunteered)	4	11
Not sure	3	5

Among those 65 and over, blacks are much more conscious of not receiving enough respect than are whites: a full 60% of older blacks feel they get "too little respect" from younger people today compared with only 43% of older whites.

Q.15a(1)

WHETHER PEOPLE OVER 65 GET RIGHT AMOUNT OF RESPECT FROM YOUNGER PEOPLE THESE DAYS

	Public 18-64		Public 65 and Over	
	White %	Black %	White %	Black %
People over 65 get too much respect	1	*	1	1
People over 65 get too little respect	71	68	43	60
People over 65 get just about the right amount of respect	21	19	40	22
It depends (volunteered)	5	3	11	11
Not sure	2	10	5	6

*Less than .05%

Feelings about respect are clearly race-related and not income-related. At the same income levels, older blacks are more likely to feel they get too little respect from the young than are older whites.

Q.15(2)

WHETHER PEOPLE OVER 65 GET RIGHT AMOUNT OF RESPECT FROM YOUNGER PEOPLE THESE DAYS

	Public 65 and Over			
	Under $3,000		$3,000 to $6,999	
	White %	Black %	White %	Black %
People over 65 get too much respect	1	1	1	*
People over 65 get too little respect	44	56	42	71
People over 65 get just about the right amount of respect	35	25	43	18
It depends (volunteered)	13	11	10	7
Not sure	7	7	4	4

Observation:

Keener feelings on the part of older blacks than whites that they receive too little respect from younger people may well reflect sensitivities to racial discrimination as well as age discrimination.

Respect, however, is by no means a one-way street. Just as the old expect a certain degree of respect from the young, so do the young expect respect from the old. On the whole, the young feel they get it: a 42% plurality of those under 65 feel they get "just about the right amount of respect" from the people over 65. Another one in three disagree, however, and express the feeling that younger people get "too little respect" from people over 65:

Q.15b

WHETHER YOUNGER PEOPLE TODAY GET RIGHT AMOUNT OF RESPECT FROM PEOPLE OVER 65

	Total Public	
	Public 18-[illegible]	Public 65 and Over
	%	%
Younger people get too much respect	10	11
Younger people get too little respect	34	16
Younger people get just about the right amount of respect	42	48
It depends (volunteered)	9	16
Not sure	5	9

Concluding Observation:

Older people have in no way written themselves off as effete, closed-minded and unalert, nor do they spend nearly as much time at passive, sedentary activities as the young imagine. However, until the public at large, and especially the young, see most older people in the same way that they see themselves as individuals, the opportunities for older people to pitch in and help solve society's problems will remain as limited as young people's current respect for the elderly. In such a rapidly changing society, it is questionable whether wisdom from experience has much relevance or value today. Furthermore, wisdom from experience stresses the past of older people and plays down their present activities and their future. It is not on the basis of this trait alone that older people will be respected for their potential contributions.

In asserting in large numbers that older people get too little respect from the young these days, the younger public may well be revealing a real sense of guilt over treatment of older people today. With many fewer older people feeling that they are disrespected, this guilt appears unnecessary.

Q.15b(1)

WHETHER YOUNGER PEOPLE TODAY GET RIGHT AMOUNT OF RESPECT
FROM PEOPLE OVER 65

	Public 18 to 64				
	White	Black	High School or Less	High School Graduate/ Some College	College Graduate
	%	%	%	%	%
Younger people get too much respect	9	13	13	8	8
Younger people get too little respect	36	16	26	38	40
Younger people get just about the right amount of respect	42	49	44	40	41
It depends (volunteered)	9	8	12	9	4
Not sure	4	14	5	5	7

SECTION III:

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF PEOPLE 65 AND OVER

While the young may prefer to picture older people off by themselves, spending a good deal of their time sleeping, sitting and doing nothing, or nostalgically dwelling upon their past, older people themselves are unwilling to be relegated to the sidelines of society. In no way do they want to be excluded from things happening around them, nor limited to communities of other older people where they will spend most of their time with people at their same stage in life. Like the young, three out of four people 65 and over said they would prefer to spend most of their time with people of all different ages, rather than with people their own age only.

Q.11b

PERSONAL PREFERENCE TO SPEND MOST OF YOUR TIME WITH PEOPLE OWN AGE OR WITH PEOPLE OF ALL DIFFERENT AGES

	Public 18-64 %	Public 65 and Over %
With people about own age	25	23
With people of all different ages	74	74
Not sure	1	3

That older people would prefer to spend time with all age groups will come as no surprise to most younger people, since a majority of people under 65 expected that "most people over 65" would in fact prefer to spend most of their time with people of all different ages

Q.11a,b(1)

PUBLIC'S VIEW OF HOW "MOST PEOPLE OVER 65" WOULD PREFER TO SPEND MOST OF THEIR TIME

	Total Public		
	Total	18-64	65 and Over
	%	%	%
With people about own age	32	32	31
With people of all different ages	63	64	59
Not sure	5	4	10

Q.11a,b,(2)

PREFER TO SPEND MOST OF TIME WITH PEOPLE OWN AGE OR WITH PEOPLE OF ALL DIFFERENT AGES

	With People Own Age	With People of All Different Ages	Not Sure
	%	%	%
Total Public	24	75	1
Under $7,000	32	66	2
$7,000 to $14,999	22	76	2
$15,000 and over	21	77	1
White	21	77	2
Black	38	58	4
Blacks 65 and Over			
Under $2,000	49	50	1
$2,000 to $3,999	38	56	6
$4,000 and over	26	58	6

High income groups of all ages tend to be more likely than lower income groups to opt for spending their time with people of all ages. While whites appear to be more interested in mixing with all age groups than do blacks, these differences appear to be more income related than race related.

Functions Performed for Younger Family Members

The older generation is by no means off by itself, isolated from the young. In fact, of the 81% of senior citizens who said they have living children, 55% said they had seen them within the last day or so, and another 26% had seen them within the last week or so. Among the 75% of people 65 and over who have grandchildren, 45% had seen them within the last day or so, and another 28% within the last week or so:

Q.12b

WHEN PUBLIC 65 AND OVER LAST SAW CHILDREN OR GRANDCHILDREN
(Base: Have living children or grandchildren)

	Public 65 and Over	
	When Last Saw Children (81%)	When Last Saw Grandchildren (75%)
	%	%
Within the last day or so (including "live with them")	55	45
Within last week or so	26	28
A month ago	8	10
2-3 months ago	3	5
Longer ago than that	8	11
Not sure	*	1

The interaction between the young and the old extends far beyond regular visits, however. The public 65 and over make it clear that they perform some valuable functions for the younger generation: 90% of those with children or grandchildren said that they "give gifts" to them, 68% "help out when someone is ill," 54% "take care of grandchildren," 45% "help out

with money," 39% "give general advice on how to deal with some of life's problems," 34% "shop or run errands," 26% fix things around the house or keep house for them," 23% "give advice on bringing up children," 21% "give advice on running a home," 20% "give advice on jobs or business matters," and 16% "take grandchildren, nieces or nephews into their home to live with them."

Q.13a(white)

WAYS IN WHICH PUBLIC 65 AND OVER SAY THEY HELP THEIR CHILDREN OR GRANDCHILDREN
(Base: 82% of public 65 and over who have children or grandchildren)

	Public 65 and Over			
	Do	Don't Do	No Need/Not Applicable (Volunteered)	Not Sure
	%	%	%	%
Give gifts	90	8	1	1
Help out when someone is ill	68	19	13	*
Take care of grandchildren	54	28	17	1
Help out with money	45	44	11	*
Give general advice on how to deal with some of life's problems	39	52	8	1
Shop or run errands	34	54	12	*
Fix things around their house or keep house for them	26	60	13	1
Give advice on bringing up children	23	67	10	*
Give advice on running a home	21	70	8	1
Give advice on jobs or business matters	20	70	9	1
Take grandchildren, nieces or nephews into your home to live with you	16	64	19	1

*Less than 0.5%

The older public 65 to 69 years of age are considerably more involved in performing services for their children and grandchildren than those 80 years and over. Yet, even among those 80 and over, substantial numbers continue to help out in a variety of ways: 86% say they give gifts, for example, 57% help out when someone is ill, 38% help out with money, 34% take care of grandchildren, 23% shop or run errands, and 20% fix things around the house. In addition, substantial numbers of those 80 and over give their offspring advice on dealing with life's problems, bringing up children, running a home, etc.

Q.13a

WAYS IN WHICH PUBLIC 65 AND OVER HELP THEIR CHILDREN OR GRANDCHILDREN
(Base: 82% of public 65 and over who have children or grandchildren)

	Total Public 65 and Over %	Public 65-69 %	Public 70-79 %	Public 80 and Over %
Give gifts	90	93	89	86
Help out when someone is ill	68	78	65	57
Take care of grandchildren	54	65	53	34
Help out with money	45	50	44	38
Give general advice on how to deal with some of life's problems	39	45	37	32
Shop or run errands	34	46	29	23
Fix things around their house or keep house for them	26	31	25	20
Give advice on bringing up children	23	25	22	20
Give advice on running a home	21	24	21	17
Give advice on jobs or business matters	20	24	17	19
Take grandchildren, nieces or nephews into your home to live with you	16	20	16	11

In only three areas are the more affluent older people more involved than the less affluent: in giving gifts, helping out with money and giving advice on jobs or business matters. In all other areas, with one exception, the public 65 and over at all income levels play a comparable role in assisting their children and grandchildren. That one exception is in giving advice on bringing up children: here the less affluent appear to be more involved than their more affluent counterparts.

The role of black parents and grandparents in providing services and advice to their children and grandchildren seems to be somewhat different from the role of whites. Older blacks appear less likely than older whites to give gifts on birthdays, holidays, etc. On the other hand, blacks are far more active than whites in giving advice of all kinds to their offspring. Fifty-two percent of older blacks with children or grandchildren say they give advice on bringing up children, for example, compared with only 20% of older whites who do the same. In addition, older blacks are much more likely than older whites to take grandchildren, nieces and nephews into their home to live with them than older whites: 26% of the former say they do this, compared with only 10% of the latter.

Q.11a

WAYS IN WHICH PUBLIC 65 AND OVER SAY THEY HELP
THEIR CHILDREN OR GRANDCHILDREN
(Base: Public 65 and over who have children or grandchildren)

	Total Public 65 and Over	Under $3,000	$3,000-$6,999	$7,000-$14,999	$15,000 and Over	White	Black
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Give gifts	90	79	91	98	98	91	75
Help out when someone is ill	68	64	68	77	66	68	73
Take care of grandchildren	54	49	54	63	55	54	49
Help out with money	45	32	45	59	59	45	41
Give general advice on how to deal with some of life's problems	39	34	40	43	45	37	62
Shop or run errands	34	28	33	44	35	34	33
Fix things around the house or keep house for them	26	25	25	31	28	26	31
Give advice on bringing up children	23	27	23	21	17	20	32
Give advice on running a home	21	23	23	20	14	19	41
Give advice on jobs or business matters	20	15	21	22	28	18	32
Take grandchildren, nieces or nephews into your home to live with you	16	15	17	19	14	15	29

Just as the public 65 and over were asked to report on the ways in which they offer assistance and advice, those under 65 were asked to report on the ways in which they receive assistance from their parents or grandparents over 65. This dual questioning was designed as a means to compare the older generation's perceptions of how they help their children and grand-

children with the younger generation's perceptions of what assistance and advice they feel that they receive from their parents or grandparents over 65.

In four areas, the two generations agree: like percentages of the young and the old feel that parents and grandparents over 65 assist their offspring by giving gifts, shopping or running errands, fixing things around their house or keeping house for them, or taking grandchildren, nieces or nephews into their homes to live.

In three other areas, the young credit their parents or grandparents with less assistance than the older generation claims they offer: in helping out when someone is ill, in taking care of grandchildren, and in helping out with money.

In giving advice, however, the tables turn and the younger generation reports that their parents or grandparents over 65 give far more advice than the older generation say they do. Forty-two percent of those under 65, for example, say their older parents or grandparents give them advice on running the home, while only 11% of the older generation feel they do.

Interpretation:

These findings could be interpreted in two ways: either the older generation are just not aware of how much advice they give to their offspring, or the young tend to exaggerate the amount of advice they in fact receive.

In economic terms, the contribution that older people make to younger members of their family is substantial. In part, this contribution takes the form of gifts and money offered by older parents and grandparents to their offspring. In addition, however, the services performed by older people for their children and grandchildren represent substantial monetary savings for the young. As nurses for the ill, as babysitters for small children, as shoppers and errand runners, as home repairers and housekeepers, even as surrogate parents, the public 65

and ever offer assistance to their children and grandchildren that would cost them dearly otherwise. Without the free services of older family members, the young would either have to resort to hiring outside help to perform these same tasks or, more likely, sacrifice some of their own income by taking time off from jobs to perform these same tasks themselves. There is a critical, ever indispensable role that older people play in the lives of their children or grandchildren which is largely taken for granted today.

WAYS IN WHICH PUBLIC 18 TO 64 SAY THEY RECEIVE HELP FROM PARENTS OR GRANDPARENTS OVER 65

(Base: 52% of public 18 to 64 who have parents or grandparents over 65)

	Do	Don't Do	No Need/ Not Applicable (Volunteered)	Not Sure
	%	%	%	%
Give you gifts	85	14	1	*
Give general advice on how to deal with some of life's problems	58	38	3	1
Help out when someone is ill	57	30	13	*
Take care of small children	42	37	21	-
Give advice on running a home	42	51	6	1
Give advice on bringing up children	40	48	12	*
Help out with money	35	56	9	*
Give advice on jobs or business matters	31	63	6	*
Shop or run errands	30	58	12	-
Fix things around your house or keep house for you	22	66	12	*
Take grandchildren, nieces or nephews into their home to live with them	21	60	19	*

*Less than 0.5%

Q.13a(1)

WAYS IN WHICH PUBLIC 18 TO 64 SAY THEY RECEIVE HELP
FROM PARENTS OR GRANDPARENTS OVER 65 (BY AGE)
(Base: Have parents or grandparents over 65)

	Total Public %	Public 18-24 %	Public 25-39 %	Public 40-45 %	Public 55-64 %
Give you gifts	85	94	85	80	73
Give general advice on how to deal with some of life's problems	58	62	61	57	34
Help out when someone is ill	57	74	57	49	28
Take care of small children	42	53	46	35	16
Give advice on running a home	42	50	41	40	25
Give advice on bringing up children	40	45	40	39	23
Help out with money	35	52	34	24	20
Give advice on job or business matters	31	44	33	19	17
Shop or run errands	30	42	31	22	17
Fix things around your house or keep house for you	22	31	20	18	9
Take grandchildren, nieces or nephews into their home to live with them	21	25	23	15	10

Gainful Employment of People 65 and Over

The economic contribution of older Americas is in no way limited, however, to the services provided to the young on the family level. Twelve percent of the public 65 and over are providing paid service, 3% full-time and 9% part-time. These figures represent a total of over 2.5 million people 65 and over who are working full or part-time. An additional 6% of the older public are part of the labor force but currently unemployed, while another 17% identified themselves as housewives:

Q.15a

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF PUBLIC 65 AND OVER

	Public 65 and Over
	%
Employed full-time	3
Employed part-time	9
Housewife	17
Unemployed	6
Retired	63
Other	2

Employment rates are much higher among older people 65 to 69 years of age than among those 70 and over: 18% of those 65 to 69 are gainfully employed, 4% full-time and 14% part-time. In addition, 17% of men 65 and over are employed, compared with 9% of women. Employment rates are comparable among older whites and blacks, however: 12% of whites 65 and over are currently working, compared with an identical 12% of blacks.

In the decade preceeding age 65, the employment rate remains high: 48% of people 55 to 64 are employed: 38% full-time, 10% part-time. What is striking, however, is the high unemployment rate among those 55 to 64:

10% of this group consider themselves in the labor force but currently unable to find a job. This figure drops down to 6% among those 65 and over.

Observation:

The high unemployment rate among people approaching the standard retirement age is striking, and suggests that older people in their late 50's and early 60's do indeed have a serious problem finding jobs. It should be kept in mind that the survey was conducted in the late spring and early summer of 1974; unemployment figures among an age group are sure to have increased over recent recessionary months.

It is likely that many of these unemployed people, when they reach 65 or so, no longer call themselves unemployed but rather give up looking for a job and consider themselves retired. This may in part explain the drop-off in the unemployment rate mentioned above.

Q.19a(2)

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF PUBLIC 65 AND OVER

	Public 65 and Over				
	Total	Men	Women	White	Black
	%	%	%	%	%
Employed full-time	3	5	2	3	2
Employed part-time	9	12	7	9	10
Unemployed	6	1	8	5	7
Housewife	17	-	30	18	10
Retired	63	82	50	63	71
Other	2	*	3	2	2

*Less than 0.5%

Q.19a(1)

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS (BY AGE)

	Public 55-64	Public 65-69	Public 70-79	Public 80 and Over
	%	%	%	%
Employed full-time	38	4	3	1
Employed part-time	10	14	8	3
Retired	18	61	63	69
Unemployed	10	4	7	6
Housewife	22	15	18	20
Other	2	2	1	1

People 65 and over who continue to work full or part-time are involved in the following occupations: 18% are managers, officials or proprietors, 17% service workers, 15% operatives or unskilled laborers, 11% skilled craftsmen or foremen, 10% professionals, 10% sales workers, 8% clerical workers, and 8% farmers.

A comparison of the occupations of people 65 and over who continue to work with those of their retired peers identifies the occupations which tend more than others to permit people to continue working past their sixty-fifth birthday. Managers, officials and proprietors make up 18% of the older people still employed and only 9% of those retired. Similarly, sales workers represent 10% of employed older people and only 4% of retired. In addition, 17% of older working people are service workers, compared with 14% of those retired.

On the other hand, however, one occupation stands out from the rest as having far less room for older employees: a full 22% of retired people were skilled craftsmen or foremen before their retirement, while only 11% of those still employed hold those jobs.

Q.19b

OCCUPATIONS OF EMPLOYED AND RETIRED PUBLIC 65 AND OVER
(Base: Employed full-time or part-time)

	Public 65 and Over	
	Employed Full-time or Part-Time	Retired
	%	%
Professional	10	12
Manager, official, proprietor	18	9
Clerical worker	8	10
Sales worker	10	4
Skilled craftsman, foreman	11	22
Operative, unskilled laborer	15	17
Service worker	17	13
Farmer, farm manager, laborer	8	9
Other	3	2

Additional occupation figures indicate further the occupations which have a relatively high representation of older people and those with low representation of people 65 and over. A look at the occupational distribution of three age groups (18 to 54, 55 to 64, and 65 and over) show, once again, that the following occupations have a lower representation of older workers than of young: skilled craftsmen or foremen, professionals, and clerical workers. Higher proportions of older people than of young are employed as managers, officials or proprietors, as sales workers, service

workers and farmers. Offsetting these shifts in proportion, it is worthwhile to note, however, that people 65 and over do compete for or hold jobs in all categories of work. Those categories where part-time work is possible gain in importance with age.

Q.19b(1)

OCCUPATION BY AGE
(Base: Employed full-time or part-time)

	Total Public			
	Total	18-54	55-64	65 and Over
	%	%	%	%
Professional	19	20	13	10
Manager, official, proprietor	11	11	11	18
Clerical worker	13	13	10	8
Sales worker	6	6	5	10
Skilled craftsman, foreman	22	23	19	11
Operative, unskilled laborer	15	15	18	15
Service worker	10	9	15	17
Farmer, farm manager, laborer	3	2	6	8
Other	1	1	3	3

Observation:

As managers, officials or proprietors, sales workers or service workers, people can apparently look forward to longer careers than in other fields. The longer working careers of managers, officials and proprietors are explained by such managerial qualifications as their higher education, historic growth, age. etc. Positions as skilled craftsmen, foremen, clerical workers and professionals, however, are either less attractive to or less open to older workers, with many older blue collar workers pushed out by younger, physically stronger workers. Members of the latter occupational groups are prime candidates for occupational retraining in their 50's.

The potential manpower among older Americans appears to extend far beyond the 12% of the public 65 and over who are currently employed. The results of the study indicate that substantial numbers of retired or unemployed people would welcome the opportunity to be gainfully employed.

Among the 63% of the older public who are retired, 37% (or about 4.4 million older people) said that they did not retire by choice but rather were forced to retire. A higher 41% of retired men, 46% of retired people with incomes under $3,000, and 50% of retired blacks said that they had retired against their will.

Q.20h

WHETHER RETIRED BY CHOICE
(Base: 63% of public 65 and over who are "retired")

	Retired by Choice %	Forced to Retire %	Not Sure %
Total	61	37	2
Men	58	41	1
Women	66	32	2
Under $3,000	53	46	1
$3,000 - $6,999	62	36	2
$7,000 - $14,999	68	30	2
$15,000 and over	65	35	-
White	63	36	1
Black	43	50	7
Some high school or less	58	41	1
High school graduate, some college	67	30	3
College graduate	70	30	-

Lack of job opportunities is clearly a problem for substantial minorities of older people. Among those 65 and over who are still working, 26% said that "not enough job opportunities" was a serious problem ("very" or "somewhat") for them personally, and a like 25% of retired people 65 and over said the same.

Q.6a,19a

SERIOUSNESS OF "NOT ENOUGH JOB OPPORTUNITIES" FOR YOU PERSONALLY

	Public 55-64		Public 65 and Over	
	Employed*	Retired	Employed*	Retired
	%	%	%	%
Very serious problem	5	8	6	8
Somewhat serious problem	24	12	20	17
Hardly a problem at all	67	80	72	73
Not sure	4	-	2	2

*"Employed" includes employed full-time, employed part-time and currently within the labor force but unemployed.

A majority of retired or unemployed people 65 and over expressed no interest in resuming work. Yet, over three in ten of them (approximately 4 million people) said that they would like to work. Among the lowest income group, a higher 43% of older retired or unemployed people are not happy with their unemployment.

WHETHER WOULD LIKE TO WORK
(Base: 69% of public 65 and over who are "retired" or "unemployed")

	Total %	Under $3,000 %	$3,000-$6,999 %	$7,000-$14,999 %	$15,000 and Over %
Would like to work	31	43	31	20	23
Would not like to work	65	54	64	76	74
Not sure	4	3	5	4	3

While poor health was volunteered as the major obstacle keeping those who would like to work from actually working, they mentioned other reasons as well: 28% said they were simply "too old," 15% said "no work available," 8% mentioned they had "other interests," 4% said they would lose their social security or pension benefits" if they went back to work, and 2% blamed a "lack of transportation."

Q.20e

WHAT'S KEEPING YOU FROM WORKING
(Base: 31% of public 65 and over who are retired or unemployed but "would like to work")

	Total %
Poor health	57
Too old	28
No work available; lack of job opportunities	15
Other interests (e.g., housework, gardening, travel)	8
Would lose benefits (e.g., social security, pension), pay too much taxes, if I worked	4
Lack of transportation	2
All other answers	10
Don't know	*

*Less than 0.5%

Observation:

It is worth remembering that poor health was identified as a very serious personal problem by only 21% of people 65 and over. As a reason for not working for those who would like to work, poor health was by far the number one response. It is reasonable to assume from these results that health is a learned excuse to cover up for other reasons such as "nobody wants me."

Only 15% of the unemployed or retired who would like to go back to work (or, in total, 3% of the retired or unemployed) blamed their unemployment on "no work available." Yet, additional probing reveals that at least six times that many among the retired or unemployed (20%) would in fact consider working if they were asked back to their jobs or offered a new, suitable job. While 71% would definitely not consider it, 11% would definitely consider it, 9% would possibly consider it, 7% said it depends on the job, and 2% were not sure.

Q.20f

REACTION IF YOU WERE ASKED TO COME BACK TO WORK
OR TAKE ON A NEW JOB THAT SUITED YOU WELL
(Base: 69% of public 65 and over who are "retired" or "unemployed")

	Total	Under $3000	$3000-$6999	$7,000-$14,999	$15,000 and Over
	%	%	%	%	%
Would definitely consider it	11	14	10	8	9
Would possibly consider it	9	8	10	8	8
Would definitely not consider it	71	68	72	75	77
It depends (volunteered)	7	9	6	8	3
Not sure	2	1	2	1	3

Observation:

There are clearly many older Americans who were told at a certain age that they were too old to continue their jobs, and were retired against their will. In fact, nearly two out of five retired people 65 and over said that this was their experience. A full 31% of those retired or unemployed say they want to work, however. While many of those who want to work cite poor health or old age as the reasons why they are not working, the findings suggest that these obstacles would be easily overcome if these people were asked to come back to work or to take on a new job. The apparent problem for many older Americans is not that they themselves feel that they are too old or too sick to work, but rather that they have been told they are. With frequent discouragement from working, disinterest in employment may well have become a learned response for many older people who might otherwise prefer to work. In short, with over 4 million older unemployed or retired individuals who want to work, there exists among the retired and unemployed public 65 and over an untapped source of manpower.

Not only would many older Americans like to work and are not currently doing so but one in ten people 65 and older (over 2.2 million people) feel they have some specific skills they would like to use but that no one will give them a chance to use them. This feeling exists not only among the retired, however; a like number of older people who are employed also feel that they have some skills they are not using.

Q.24a

WHETHER FEEL YOU HAVE SOME SKILLS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO USE BUT NO ONE WILL GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO USE THEM

	Public 65 and Over		
	Total	Employed	Retired
	%	%	%
Feel that way	11	13	12
Don't feel that way	84	82	83
Not sure	5	5	5

By no means, however, is this problem exclusive to older people; even larger numbers of those under 65, and particularly those right out of school, feel that no one will give them a chance to use some of their skills.

Q.24a

WHETHER FEEL YOU HAVE SOME SKILLS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO USE BUT NO ONE WILL GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO USE THEM

	Total Public	18-24	25-39	40-54	55-65	65-69	70-79	80 and Over
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Feel that way	20	33	22	19	13	14	10	6
Don't feel that way	64	62	74	77	81	80	85	90
Not sure	4	5	4	4	6	6	5	4

Moreover, there are a number of older people who would be interested in learning new skills or participating in a job training program in order to take on a different kind of job from what they are used to doing. Fifteen percent of the public 65 and over (over 3 million people) expressed such an interest. An even higher 29% of older working people would be interested in learning new skills or in job training programs. Among those of pre-retirement age (55 to 64 years old), a much higher 37% would be interested in job training. Once again, however, interest is greatest among the young: a full 64% of those 18 to 24 would be interested in learning new skills or participating in job training programs:

Q.23,19a

INTEREST IN LEARNING NEW SKILLS OR PARTICIPATING IN JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS IN ORDER TO TAKE ON A DIFFERENT KIND OF JOB FROM WHAT YOU ARE USED TO DOING

	Public 65 and Over		
	Total	Employed	Retired
	%	%	%
Very interested	6	10	6
Somewhat interested	9	19	9
Not interested at all	78	65	78
It depends (volunteered)	5	5	5
Not sure	2	1	2

Q.23

INTEREST IN LEARNING NEW SKILLS OR PARTICIPATING IN JOB TRAINING PROGRAM IN ORDER TO TAKE ON A DIFFERENT KIND OF JOB FROM WHAT YOU ARE USED TO DOING

	Total Public	18-24	25-39	40-54	55-64	65-69	70-79	80 and Over
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very interested	26	36	37	24	14	9	5	2
Somewhat interested	24	28	29	23	23	12	8	4
Not interested at all	44	30	29	47	35	72	80	89
It depends (volunteered)	5	5	4	6	7	5	5	4
Not sure	1	1	1	*	1	2	2	1

*Less than 0.5%

Observation:

There is apparently a serious need in this country today for career planning and job training programs for people of all ages. Not surprisingly, this need is greatest among the young, who are not only among the worst victims of unemployment, but who are also the most unsettled in their career plans.

Government and the private sector have until now aimed their job training efforts where the demand is greatest: among young people in their 20's and 30's. What this study reveals, however, is a substantial demand for similar programs by people in their 40's, 50's and 60's.

Many of these older people may be expressing an interest in career variety and simply feel that it is time for a change or for advancement. Others, however, may be recognizing that mandatory retirement is not too far off and that they had better prepare themselves for it by learning an occupation that they can continue until they are ready to stop working.

In any case, one can conclude from these findings not only that the public 65 and over is currently making a substantial economic contribution through full-time and part-time employment, but that there remain well over 4 million older people who would like to work and be paid for it. They are not counted as unemployed in official statistics, but if they were, the unemployment rate nationwide would be nearly double what it is today.

While some may welcome mandatory retirement, others apparently see it as an injustice, both to themselves and to society. For not only does forced retirement deprive many older people of the opportunity to work; it also deprives society of the energies and talents of many capable and qualified older workers. Section VIII will explore in greater depth the public's attitudes toward mandatory retirement.

Volunteer Work Among Public 65 and Over

Apart from any work they're paid for, 22% of the public 65 and over reported that they do volunteer work, compared with 35% of those under 65. Among those 65 to 69, 28% do volunteer work. Among older people with incomes of $7,000 or more, more than one in three said they do volunteer

work. Forty-two percent of the older college educated do volunteer work. Volunteerism is somewhat higher among older whites (23%) than among older blacks (15%). Furthermore, a higher proportion of employed people 65 and over (33%) than those not employed (20%) do volunteer work.

Q.24b

WHETHER DO ANY VOLUNTEER WORK APART FROM WORK YOU'RE PAID FOR

	Do Volunteer Work %	Don't Do Volunteer Work %
Total Public	33	67
18 to 64	35	65
65 and over	22	78
18 to 24	31	69
25 to 39	39	61
40 to 54	36	64
55 to 64	33	67
65 to 69	28	72
70 to 79	20	80
80 and over	12	88

The types of volunteer work that older people are most involved in include health and mental health (e.g., working in hospitals and clinics, programs for the emotionally ill, disease prevention), transportation (e.g., driving the ill, the aged, handicapped or others in need), civic affairs (e.g., voter registration, lobbying and advocacy activities), psychological and social support services (e.g., friendly visiting to the homebound, programs in nursing homes, outreach programs to find people in need, hot-line counseling,

telephone reassurance for shut-ins), give-away programs (e.g., providing emergency food, clothes, household equipment, thrift shops), and family, youth and children-oriented services (e.g., programs for foster children, teaching home management skills, working in residential facilities for dependent children, day care services).

TYPE OF VOLUNTEER WORK DONE

	Public 18-64 (35%) %	Public 65 and Over (22%) %
Education(e.g., teacher aides, tutoring, adult literacy programs for drop-outs, English as a second language, library services, story hours, raising scholarship money for needy students, setting up pre-schools)	26	9
Family, youth and children-oriented services (e.g., programs for foster children, teaching home management skills, working in residential facilities for dependent children, multi-faceted youth service programs, day care services, involving parents in their children's development)	24	15
Recreation (e.g., coaching in sports, teaching arts and crafts, developing club facilities)	19	11
Health and mental health (e.g., working in hospitals and clinics, programs for the emotionally ill, disease prevention, alcoholism, drug abuse prevention, family planning, suicide prevention)	17	23
Civic affairs (e.g., voter registration, lobbying and advocacy activities)	16	17
Psychological, social support services (e.g., big brother or big sister programs, friendly visiting to the homebound, programs in nursing homes, aiding unwed mothers, hot-line counseling, telephone reassurance for shut-ins, outreach programs to find people in need	12	17
Administration and organization in volunteerism (e.g., information and referral services, released time volunteer assignments, summer volunteer opportunities, directories of community volunteer opportunities)	11	11
Physical environment (e.g., anti-pollution efforts, conservation education and practices, developing playground and parks, clean-up campaigns, recycling centers)	11	5
Give-away programs (e.g., providing emergency food, clothes, household equipment, holiday gift bureaus, thrift shops)	10	16
Cultural activities (e.g., teaching art, theatre for young people, general enrichment opportunities, museum tours, sponsoring art centers)	9	7
Transportation (e.g., driving the aged, ill, handicapped or others in need	9	21
Interracial, interethnic, intergroup relations (e.g., formation of coalitions among religious denominations to tackle common problems, preparation of literacy materials to improve minority image)	8	8
Housing (e.g., improving existing structures in rundown areas, non-profit programs to build new houses, home maintenance assistance)	5	6
Legal rights, law enforcement and crime prevention (e.g., working with juveniles to prevent delinquency, probation/parole programs, legal services, programs in juvenile institutions and prisons, police-community relations	5	3
Employment and jobs (e.g., career counseling, placement services, upgrading skills)	3	3
Nutrition (e.g., teaching food selection and preparation, school lunch programs, meals-on-wheels, food distribution programs)	3	5
Entrepreneurship (e.g., technical and/or financial advice to struggline businesses, management training, assisting minority businessmen)	2	1
Consumer services (e.g., financial and budget counseling, consumer complaints, consumer education)	1	1

In real numbers, the current volunteer force among older people is 4.5 million strong. Apart from those already doing volunteer work, however, there are another 10% of the public 65 and over who say that they would like to volunteer their services. The potential volunteer force among older Americans is, therefore, 6.6 million people.

Q.24b,c

VOLUNTEERISM AMONG PUBLIC 65 AND OVER

	Do Volunteer Work %	Do Not Do Volunteer Work But Would Like to %	Potential Volunteer Force %
Total Public 65 and Over	22	10	32
65-69	28	11	39
70-79	20	10	30
80 and over	12	10	22
Men	20	8	28
Women	23	12	35
Under $3,000	12	12	24
$3,000-$6,999	19	10	29
$7,000-$14,999	35	8	43
$15,000 and over	36	6	42
Some high school or less	15	11	26
High school grad, some college	31	8	39
College graduate	42	10	52
White	23	10	33
Black	15	10	25
Employed	33	11	44
Not employed	20	8	28
Retired	20	10	30

The types of volunteer work that this additional 10% of people 65 and over are interested in are far-reaching, with greatest interest expressed in the health and mental health area, in psychological and social support services, give-away programs, and family, youth and children-oriented services.

Q.24b,c,e,f

POTENTIAL FOR VOLUNTEER WORK AMONG PUBLIC 65 AND OVER

	Do Volunteer Work	Do Not Do Volunteer Work But Would Like To	Potential For Volunteer Work
	%	%	%
Health and mental health	5	4	9
Transportation	5	2	7
Civic affairs	4	2	6
Psychological and social support services	4	3	7
Give away programs	4	3	7
Family, youth and children-oriented services	3	3	6
Education	2	2	4
Recreation	2	1	3
Administration and organization in volunteerism	2	1	3
Cultural activities	2	1	3
Interracial, interethnic, intergroup relations	2	1	3
Physical environment	1	1	2
Housing	1	1	2
Legal rights, law enforcement, crime prevention	1	1	2
Employment and jobs	1	1	2
Nutrition	1	1	2
Entrepreneurship	*	1	1
Consumer services	*	1	1

*Less than 0.5%

Older people who say they would like to do volunteer work but are not doing so explained what is keeping them from volunteering their time, and energies. While the primary reason mentioned was "illness, poor health," others mentioned "not enough time," "no transportation," and "family responsibilities." Another 8% mentioned "no opportunities available:"

Q.24d

WHAT'S KEEPING YOU FROM DOING VOLUNTEER WORK (Volunteered)
(Base: Don't do volunteer work but would like to)

	Public 18-64 %	Public 65 and Over %
Too busy with work	32	8
Not enough time	27	12
Family responsibilities, raising children	27	9
Illness, poor health	6	42
Too tired; lack of energy	6	7
No opportunity, nothing available	5	8
No transportation	5	12
Haven't gotten around to it yet, but will soon	7	8
All other answers	6	12
Don't know	-	1

Note: Totals come to more than 100% since some people volunteered more than one answer.

Observation:

While many older people who wanted paid employment blamed their not working on their poor health or being too old, it was discovered that large numbers of these same people would be interested in working if jobs were made available to them. Similarly, it is possible that, while only 8% of older people who would like to do volunteer work said there were no volunteer positions available to them, a substantial portion of these potential volunteer workers would not consider their health, their age or other interests as obstacles if they were offered opportunities to do volunteer work. With minimal recruiting, voluntary organizations would have a great success in enlisting large numbers of older people in their ranks of volunteers.

That older people are felt to make good volunteers was established by the survey. Eighty-one percent of the public 18 to 64 (and an identical number of those responsible for hiring and firing) agreed that "People over 65 usually make good volunteers." An even higher 94% of those under 65 agreed that "People over 65 usually have some skills and talents that they could make good use of by doing volunteer work."

Q.25,19j

ATTITUDES TOWARD PEOPLE OVER 65 AS VOLUNTEERS
(Agree "strongly" and "somewhat" only)

	Total Public 18-64 %	Public 18-64 With Responsibility for Hiring and Firing %
People over 65 usually make good volunteers	81	81
People over 65 usually have some skills and talents that they could make good use of by doing volunteer work	94	94

Furthermore, older people as a group generally have positive attitudes toward doing volunteer work. By 95 to 2%, those 65 and over agreed that "Doing volunteer work is a good way for people to keep themselves busy and active." By 81 to 9%, they feel that "Volunteer work is essential to meet the community's needs, and everyone should do his share." Similarly, by 78 to 10%, those 65 and over agreed that "People with unused skills and talents should make use of them by doing volunteer work."

While overwhelming majorities of older people agreed on the advantages of doing volunteer work, further probing revealed some real reluctance toward doing volunteer work. While 42% of older people rejected the notion that "Most jobs saved for volunteer workers are routine and boring, and not very rewarding," 32% agreed with this statement and the remaining 26% were not sure.

Another statement, however, revealed even more negative feelings among all age groups, not only among the older public, toward doing volunteer work: by 78 to 15%, the public 65 and over agreed that "If someone's work is valuable, he should be paid for it." Majorities of older people in all income groups agreed with this statement. (Those under 65 agreed that people should be paid for their work by 72 to 24%).

Observation:

While two in ten older people are already doing volunteer work, another one in ten are willing to make themselves available for a wide variety of volunteer tasks. If local communities were to take advantage of their interest, they could increase their total volunteer force among older people by 50%.

While substantial numbers of people 65 and over recognize volunteer work as a good way to keep themselves busy and active, to use their own

unused skills and talents, and to meet the community's needs, they are in no way interested in doing volunteer work exclusively. To the contrary, older people feel even more strongly than the young that if a person's work is valuable, he should be paid for it. While older people are willing to accept their share of uncompensated community service, their own self-respect and the realities of today's economy make them no more interested than the young in working full-time without pay. Like the young, those who recognize that they have skills and talents expect to be paid for them.

Q.25

ATTITUDES TOWARD VOLUNTEERISM

	Agree Strongly %	Agree Somewhat %	Disagree Somewhat %	Disagree Strongly %	Not Sure %	Total Agree %	Total Disagree %
Positive Statements About Volunteer Work							
Doing volunteer work is a good way for people to keep themselves busy and active.	64	32	2	*	2	96	2
Public 18-64	65	31	2	*	2	96	2
Public 65 and over	59	36	2	*	3	95	2
Volunteer work is essential to meet the community's needs and everyone should do his share.	44	40	8	2	6	84	10
Public 18-64	44	40	8	3	5	84	11
Public 65 and over	40	41	8	1	10	81	9
People with unused skills and talents should make use of them by doing volunteer work.	36	47	8	2	7	83	10
Public 18-64	37	47	8	2	6	84	10
Public 65 and over	34	44	8	2	12	78	10
Negative Statements About Volunteer Work							
If someone's work is valuable, he should be paid for it.	38	36	17	5	4	74	22
Public 18-64	36	36	18	6	4	72	24
Public 65 and over	44	34	12	3	7	78	15
Most jobs saved for volunteer workers are routine and boring, and not very rewarding.	8	23	31	23	15	31	54
Public 18-64	8	23	31	24	14	31	55
Public 65 and over	9	23	29	13	26	32	42
People doing volunteer work often get in the way and slow things down more than they help out.	3	15	35	34	13	18	69
Public 18-64	3	14	35	37	11	17	72
Public 65 and over	6	21	30	21	22	27	51
People Over 65 As Volunteers							
People over 65 usually have some skills and talents that they could make good use of by doing volunteer work.	52	41	2	1	4	93	3
Public 18-64	53	41	2	1	3	94	3
Public 65 and over	47	43	3	*	7	90	3
People over 65 usually make good volunteer workers.	44	37	6	1	12	81	7
Public 18-64	43	38	6	1	2	81	7
Public 65 and over	47	35	5	1	12	82	6

*Less than 0.5%

Q.25(1)

PUBLIC 65 AND OVER'S ATTITUDES TOWARD VOLUNTEERISM (BY INCOME AND RACE)
(AGREE "STRONGLY" OR "SOMEWHAT" ONLY)

	Public 65 and Over						
	Total %	Under $3,000 %	$3,000-$6,999 %	$7,000-$14,999 %	$15,000 and Over %	White %	Black %
Positive Statements About Volunteer Work							
Doing volunteer work is a good way for people to keep themselves busy and active	95	93	94	95	96	95	84
Volunteer work is essential to meet the community's needs, and everyone should do his share	81	79	80	86	82	82	71
People with unused skills and talents should make use of them by doing volunteer work	78	75	78	82	85	80	66
Negative Statements About Volunteer Work							
If someone's work is valuable, he should be paid for it	78	82	83	72	63	77	85
Most jobs saved for volunteer workers are routine and boring, and not very rewarding	32	27	31	36	37	31	29
People doing volunteer work often get in the way and slow things down more than they help out	27	31	25	23	25	25	31

Enrollment in Educational Institutions or Courses Among Public 65 and Over

Current enrollment in educational institutions or courses in this country is limited almost entirely to the young: while 34% of the public 18 to 24 years of age, and 15% of those 25 to 39 say they are enrolled in higher education, only 5% of those 40 to 54, 5% of those 55 to 65, and 2% of those 65 and over say that they are currently enrolled in an educational institution or taking courses. In real numbers, about 400,000 older people are enrolled in courses.

Q.26a CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION OR TAKING COURSES

	Enrolled %
Total Public	13
18-24	34
25-39	15
40-54	5
55-64	5
65 and over	2

Among all age groups, those most likely to be enrolled in educational institutions or taking courses are those who have already achieved high levels of education. Among the public 65 and over, for example, 7% of college graduates are currently enrolled, compared with 1% of those with some high school or less.

Q.26a(1)

CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION OR TAKING COURSES

	Some High School or Less %	High School Grad/Some College %	College Graduate %
Total Public	3	16	23
18-54	5	18	25
55-64	2	8	11
65 and over	1	3	7

Not only are the young far more likely to be taking courses than the old; the young who are enrolled are also more likely to be attending colleges, universities or adult education schools than older students. Older students are just as likely to be taking their courses at churches as at colleges or universities.

Q.26b

WHERE ENROLLED OR TAKING COURSES
(Base: Currently enrolled or taking courses)

	Public 18-64 (14%) %	Public 65 and Over (2%) %
A college or university	60	24
An adult education school	12	19
A church	3	26
A high school	7	-
By correspondence	5	10
Other	16	21

Education appears to serve different purposes at different times of life. While the young and the old share their primary purpose for taking courses, to expand their general knowledge about some field or hobby; the young are also interested in taking courses to acquire job skills and those 55 and over are secondarily interested in making good use of their time and being with other people.

Q.26c

REASONS FOR TAKING COURSES
(Base: Currently enrolled or taking courses)

	Public 18-24 (34%) %	Public 25-39 (15%) %	Public 40-54 (5%) %	Public 55-64 (5%) %	Public 65 and Over (2%) %
To expand your general knowledge about some field or hobby	72	67	85	80	76
To acquire job skills	60	60	14	24	6
To make good use of your time	34	20	14	49	39
To be with other people	23	8	-	44	28
Other reasons	6	12	3	-	2

While only 2% of those 65 and over are currently enrolled in courses, there may well be additional potential students among the remaining 98%, particularly among those who say they are not enrolled because they're too old, those who say they don't know of any courses for them, those who say none are available, and those who say taking courses is too expensive.

Observation:

To those few who have enrolled in courses at colleges or universities, churches and adult education schools, adult education offers older people an excellent opportunity to expand their knowledge about a field or hobby that interests them while at the same time make good use of their time and be with other people. Institutions that currently accept older people into their regular curriculum or that have developed special academic programs for senior citizens would do well to publicize them better in order to attract those older people who said they are currently not enrolled because they're too old, there are no courses available, or they don't know any courses for them. And those institutions who do not encourage enrollment among older students should recognize that the old share the same primary interest in education as the young -- to expand their knowledge in a given field.

Q.26d

MAIN REASON WHY NOT ENROLLED IN SOME EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION OR TAKING COURSES
(Base: Not enrolled or taking courses)

	Public 18-64 (86%) %	Public 65 and Over (98%) %
Not enough time	43	13
Not interested	32	45
Too expensive	8	2
Poor health	6	22
None available	3	3
Don't know any courses for me	3	4
I'm too old	1	27
Other	15	6
Not sure	1	1

SECTION IV:

PREPARATION FOR OLD AGE

The Expectations Versus the Reality of Old Age

As concluded earlier in this report, it is not the young alone who have negative expectations of old age. The older public themselves have bought the stereotypes and myths of old age, and, recognizing that life is not so terrible for them, consider themselves the exception to the rule.

In fact, for many older people, life has turned out better than they expected it to be. For every older person who feels that his or her own life is worse now than what he/she thought it would be, there are three who say that life is better now than they expected. In fact, as many people under 65 feel that their current lives fall short of earlier expectations as those 65 and over:

Q.8a

YOUR LIFE NOW, COMPARED TO WHAT YOU EXPECTED IT WOULD BE WHEN YOU WERE YOUNGER

	Public 18-64 %	Public 65 and Over %
Better than expected	37	32
Worse than expected	11	11
About the way expected	47	47
Not sure	5	10

The tendency to feel that life hasn't measured up to what one hoped varies more with income and race than it does with age. Seventeen percent of the public with incomes under $7,000 feel that their life today

is worse than expected, compared with only 8% of those with incomes of $15,000 and over. Similarly, 37% of the white public feel that their life is better now than they thought it would be, compared with only 22% of blacks who feel that way.

Q.8a(1)

YOUR LIFE NOW, COMPARED TO WHAT YOU EXPECTED IT WOULD BE WHEN YOU WERE YOUNGER

	Total Public					
	Total	Under $7,000	$7,000 to $14,999	$15,000 and Over	White	Black
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Better than expected	36	28	37	42	37	22
Worse than expected	11	17	10	8	11	15
About the way expected	47	47	48	46	47	55
Not sure	6	8	5	4	5	8

While low income groups and blacks expressed greater disappointment with their lives today than did the more affluent and whites, the phenomenon of rising expectations has clearly had a greater impact on the young within these disadvantaged groups than among the old. Among blacks, for example, 31% of those 65 and over said their life has turned out better than expected, compared with only 20% of blacks 18 to 64. Similarly, among the under $7,000 income group, the young are more likely than the old to feel their life is worse than they anticipated.

Q.8a(2)

YOUR LIFE NOW, COMPARED TO WHAT YOU EXPECTED IT WOULD BE WHEN YOU WERE YOUNGER

	Black		Under $7,000		
	18-64	65 and Over	18-54	55-64	65 and Over
	%	%	%	%	%
Better than expected	20	31	30	19	29
Worse than expected	16	11	21	19	12
About the way expected	56	48	42	56	47
Not sure	8	10	7	6	12

Observation:

That the low income young are less satisfied with their life today compared with what they had expected than are older people with comparable incomes suggests several possible implications: older people can in fact live more comfortably than the young on the same low income because of their limited needs in life; the young simply have higher expectations than the old; life satisfaction in general matures with years.

Those 65 and over who feel that their life today is better than they expected it would be when they were younger explained why they feel that way:

In the words of a 70-year-old retired operative in Lynn, Massachusetts, with an income of $7,000-$9,999 "We have a new house and we enjoy it. Living in an apartment was never any good. I enjoy puttering around. It's a lot of work, but I enjoy it."

"Things are better than I expected," said a 73-year-old, retired professional from Yucca Valle, California with an income of around $6,000, "because I never thought we would have as much money as we do. We both worked. We saved money and both get Social Security.

A 69-year-old, female owner of a laundromat in Bunker Hill, Illinois explained, "I have my children and my grandchildren living across the street. My health is better than my friends. I have enough money for my needs. My business is doing well."

According to a 66-year-old, retired professional in Durham, North Carolina with an income of about $15,000, "There's more care from government agencies than there used to be. The communities have more programs for older people. There is more thought given to the older people."

"Well, I think I am better able to take care of myself than I thought I would be at my age. I have better health. I worried that things would not be as nice as they are now," explained a 68-year-old manager in Phoenix, with an annual income of just over $4,000.

Life is better than expected for a 79-year-old, retired service worker from Eagle Creek, Oregon with an income of about $2,500, "I guess, because I have a great many friends that I depend on, that I didn't know I'd have when I was younger. We share our interests and friendships together. They are all very dear to me and make my life very full and pleasant."

The answers of the 32% of people 65 and over who feel that life is better than they expected were coded and tabulated with the following results: 35% mentioned their financial security, 24% referred to their good family and/or marriage, 20% said generally that they have a good life with few problems and 18% mentioned that their health is good or better than they expected.

The 11% of those 65 and over who felt that their life had turned out worse than they had expected it would be when they were younger gave their reasons for feeling that way:

"Things are worse," explained a 67-year-old Mexican-American housewife in Phoenix, with an income of about $2,500, "because I am alone and I am sick. I didn't expect to get sick and be in poor health. I didn't expect to be alone."

A 72-year-old, retired clerical worker in Pensacola, Florida explained why things are worse for him than expected: "I was disillusioned by retirement. I found out I didn't have the time or initiative to do all I thought I would when I retired."

In the words of a 68-year-old black housewife in Brooklyn, New York with an income of between $3,000 and $3,999 a year, "I didn't expect it to be this way. I thought my husband and I would retire together. It didn't work out that way. He died before he retired."

"We thought we'd take it easy when we got older," said a 74-year-old, skilled craftsman from Columbus, Ohio, with an income of about $2,500, "but we had to take in these grandkids. We can't turn them out."

A 69-year-old retired service worker in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma with an income of under $2,000 talked about her poor health: "I didn't realize I would ever come down with heart trouble because I was a healthy woman. I can't do anything now. I have a real bad heart."

Those over 65 who felt that their life had turned out worse than expected talked primarily about their separation from their spouse or family (12%), their poor health (11%) and their financial problems (4%).

Observation:

While nearly half of all people 65 and over feel that their life turned out to be just about the way they expected it would, one in three older people have been pleasantly surprised with their later years. Many of the problems they had feared just never materialized. Instead, they talk about their financial security and having more money than they expected, their good family life and good, long marriages, their good health, and generally comfortable, good life. This is an image of older people that society may tend to overlook, focusing instead on the one in ten who feel that their lives have turned out worse than they had expected.

Q.8b

WAYS IN WHICH YOUR LIFE HAS TURNED OUT BETTER OR WORSE THAN EXPECTED
(Base: Life turned out better/worse than expected)

	Public	
	18-64 (37%)	65 and Over (32%)
	%	%
Ways in which life turned out better than expected		
Good family and marriage	43	24
Have a good spouse, happy marriage	20	7
Have a good family, children, grandchildren	23	15
Long marriage; spouse is still alive	*	2
Financial security	25	35
Financially secure; have more money than I expected	23	24
Have retirement, old age benefits; pension, social security	1	6
Don't have to work	1	5
Job satisfaction	15	7
I, spouse had/have good job; successful in business	13	4
I can still work	2	3
Good life, few problems	15	20
Have a good life, everything I want and need	9	10
Have fewer problems, less to worry about, inner peace	4	6
Have a comfortable life; appliances, technology make life easier	1	2
Never thought about it; just live and enjoy	1	2
Good home, place to live	10	7
Own my own home, house	4	4
Have a nice, better place to live	6	3
Am in good health, better than I expected	8	18
Have friends	5	4
Have a good education	4	*
Am independent, able to do what I want, live as I please	2	8
Religion, belief in God, Jesus Christ, salvation	3	3
Things are better than they used to be	3	3
My parents had it rough; things are better for me	2	2
I lived through the depression; it's better now	1	1
Have a car	1	*
Have traveled all over world, to many places	1	1
Am still alive; didn't expect to live this long	1	5
All other ways life turned out better	10	4

	Public	
	18-64 (11%)	65 and Over (11%)
	%	%
Ways in which life turned out worse than expected		
Financially; not enough money	9	4
Poor health	5	11
Poor health, sickness, physical limitations	4	10
I, spouse can't work because of poor health	1	1
Separation from family, spouse	6	12
Spouse died; had planned to enjoy things together	1	6
Alone; separated from family	1	4
Unhappy marriage, divorce	3	1
Burden of raising children, grandchildren alone	1	1
I, spouse can't work	1	1
All other ways life turned out worse	9	7
Don't know	1	1

Steps to Prepare for Later Years

Majorities of the total public agreed on seven "very important" steps people should take in preparing for their later years: 88% of the public felt that it is very important to "make sure you'll have medical care available," 81% to "prepare a will," 80% to "build up your savings," 80% to "learn about pensions and social security benefits," 70% to "buy your own home," 64% to "develop hobbies and other leisure-time activites," and 50% to "decide whether you want to move or continue to live where you are." In addition, three in ten people (31%) felt that it is very important to "plan new part-time or full-time jobs."

Q.9a

IMPORTANCE OF VARIOUS STEPS IN PREPARING FOR YOUR LATER YEARS

	Total Public			
	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important at all	Not Sure
	%	%	%	%
Make sure you'll have medical care available	88	10	2	*
Prepare a will	81	13	4	2
Build up your own savings	80	17	2	1
Learn about pensions and social security benefits	80	16	3	1
Buy your own home	70	22	6	2
Develop hobbies and other leisure-time activities	64	29	5	2
Decide whether you want to move or continue to live where you are	50	31	14	5
Plan new part-time or full-time jobs	31	46	19	4
Talk to older people about what it's like to grow old	25	35	37	3
Enroll in retirement counselling or preparation programs	23	38	33	8
Move in with children or other relatives	6	16	71	7

*Less than 0.5%

Interestingly, the young and old agree on the important steps to be taken in preparing for old age. For each of the eleven steps shown above, comparable numbers of those under 65 and those 65 and over felt that it was a "very important" step to take.

Q.9a(1)

"VERY IMPORTANT" STEPS IN PREPARING FOR YOUR LATER YEARS

	Public 18-64 %	Public 65 and Over %	Net Difference %
Make sure you'll have medical care available	88	88	-
Prepare a will	82	79	-3
Build up your savings	80	85	+5
Learn about pension and social security benefits	79	85	+6
Buy your own home	69	75	+6
Develop hobbies and other leisure-time activities	64	61	-3
Decide whether you want to move or continue to live where you are	50	53	+3
Plan new part-time or full-time jobs	32	26	-6
Talk to older people about what it's like to grow old	24	27	+3
Enroll in retirement counselling or preparation programs	23	19	-4
Move in with children or other relatives	5	7	+2

By and large, the public 65 and over have already taken the steps to prepare for their later years that they consider very important. While 88% of those 65 and over felt it was very important to make sure they'll have medical care available, a like 88% said that they have already taken the step. In four areas, however, the older public appears to be less prepared than it would like to be:

-- While 85% felt it was very important to build up their savings, only 73% of the older public said that they had in fact done so to prepare for their later years.

-- Although 79% attached a great deal of importance to preparing a will, only 65% of those 65 and over have in fact prepared one.

-- Planning new part-time or full-time jobs was considered very important by 26% of those 65 and over, but only 16% have done so.

-- While 19% felt it was very important to enroll in retirement counselling or preparation programs, a lower 8% have taken this step:

Q.9b(1)

PUBLIC 65 AND OVER WHO CONSIDER STEPS "VERY IMPORTANT" COMPARED WITH THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY TAKEN STEPS

	Public 65 and Over		
	Consider Step "Very Important"	Have Already Taken Step	Net Difference
	%	%	%
Make sure you'll have medical care available	88	88	-
Build up your savings	85	73	-12
Learn about pensions and social security benefits	85	87	+2
Prepare a will	79	65	-14
Buy your own home	75	74	-1
Develop hobbies and other leisure-time activities	61	62	+1
Decide whether you want to move or continue to live where you are	53	72	+19
Talk to older people about what its like to grow old	27	35	+8
Plan new part-time or full-time jobs	26	16	-10
Enroll in retirement counselling or preparation programs	19	8	-9
Move in with children or other relatives	7	9	+2

Least prepared for their later years are older people with incomes of under $3,000. Seventy-nine percent of this group feel sure of having medical aid available, compared with a higher 90% of those in the income bracket immediately above them ($3,000 to $6,999). Similarly, only 47% of this lowest income group have developed hobbies and other leisure-time activities, compared with 64% of those in the next highest income group. Moreover, only 52% of those in the lowest income group have built up their own savings, compared with a higher 75% of those with incomes of $3,000 to $6,999. In short, the public 65 and over with incomes under $3,000, who represent a full 28% of older people, are far less prepared for their later years than their contemporaries.

In the same way, older blacks are far less prepared for old age than are older whites. While 77% of older whites have built up their own savings, only 34% of older blacks have done the same. Similarly, while 76% of older whites have bought their own home, only 50% of older blacks have made that purchase. In only two areas do older blacks appear to be better prepared for their later years than older whites: higher numbers of blacks than whites have talked to older people about what it's like to grow old and have moved in with their children or other relatives.

Q.9b(3)

PUBLIC WHO HAVE "ALREADY TAKEN" STEPS TO PREPARE FOR LATER YEARS

	Public 65 and Over					
	Under $3,000 %	$3,000-$6,999 %	$7,000-$14,999 %	$15,000 and Over %	White %	Black %
Make sure you'll have medical aid available	79	90	92	95	89	75
Prepare a will	46	68	76	81	68	31
Build up your own savings	52	75	86	93	77	34
Learn about pensions and social security benefits	76	90	92	96	89	72
Buy your own home	56	77	88	91	76	50
Develop hobbies and other leisure-time activities	47	64	76	76	65	41
Decide whether you want to move or continue to live where you are	66	73	80	73	74	61
Plan new part-time or full-time jobs	11	15	21	24	16	11
Talk to older people about what it's like to grow old	40	34	34	33	35	47
Enroll in retirement counselling or preparation programs	7	9	10	7	8	8
Move in with children or other relatives	15	8	6	8	9	12

The differences between blacks and whites in terms of steps taken to prepare for their later years reflects in part, the lower current incomes of older blacks. Yet, even more than the current income differential between older blacks and older whites, the different degrees of preparation for old age reflect the different incomes received by these two groups in their earlier years. In other words, the older white poor (with incomes of under $3,000) are still much better prepared for their later years than the older black poor:

60% of older whites with incomes under $3,000, for example have already "built up their own savings," compared with only 22% of older blacks in the same income bracket:

Q.9b(5)

PUBLIC 65 AND OVER WHO HAVE ALREADY "BUILT UP THEIR OWN SAVINGS"

	White %	Black %
Under $3,000	60	22
$3,000 to $6,999	78	51

Observation:

Current income alone is apparently not a sufficient indicator of older people's ability to lead comfortable and secure lives. Income earned during their earlier years, total assets owned, and other measures taken to prepare for their later years are equally important guarantees of fruitful later years. Those older people who are poor today and suffer the double burden of having been poor during their younger years as well find themselves in the least secure position during their old age.

On the whole, older people seem to have taken the steps that they consider very important in preparing for their later years. In four areas they appear underprepared, however: in building up savings, preparing a will, planning new part-time or full-time jobs and enrolling in retirement counselling or preparation programs. In not building up savings, recent inflation may be as much the culprit as poor planning. In not preparing second careers or not enrolling in retirement counselling programs, the limited accessibility of job opportunities and counselling programs may also be in part to blame.

In interpreting these findings, it is important to note that the results may not be an entirely accurate measure of steps taken specifically with old age in mind. While many of the steps discussed above, such as building up savings, owning a home, planning new jobs, etc. serve as important preparations for one's later years, they nonetheless represent important preparations for younger periods of life as well.

Things Would Have Done Differently To Prepare For Later Years

While many older people have taken some very important steps to prepare for their later years, many have some regrets nonetheless that they didn't plan better. While 43% of those 65 and over surveyed said that there was nothing they would have done differently to prepare for their later years, many older people say that they would have done things differently if they could have known when they were younger what things would be like for them today.

> In the words of a 66-year-old, black retired laborer in Fayetteville, Georgia, with an income of less than $1,000, "I would have saved, if I had been getting a lot for my labor. I picked cotton in the fields. My parents made me work like a slave in those fields. They didn't let us go to school. I would have gotten some education. I know that's important. I can write my name and do some figures, but that's all."

> A 68-year-old housewife in Brattleboro, Vermont explained what she would have done differently, "I would have got more education. I went to work at the telephone company at 14 years old. I took care of my younger brothers and sisters when our parents died. Then, it was too late to go back to school."

> A 71-year-old, unemployed service worker in Mt. Home, Idaho, with an income of about $2,500 said she "would have kept medical insurance. My husband dropped our insurance for no reason that I know of. So if I had known more then, I would have insisted to keep it up for both of us."

> According to a 76-year-old, retired clerical worker in Vista, California, "We would have bought a lot of property. We would have bought gold and silver for inflation hedges. Taxes are taking all our spare money."

> A 66-year-old, part-time manager in St. Augustine, Florida, felt he "took a retirement too early. I regret not working longer and getting a higher pension."

> A 69-year-old housewife in Waycross, Georgia wishes she had worked for a living. "I guess I wish I had been able to get a job of some kind, so I could draw Social Security. I would have learned all I could about Social Security

benefits, so I wouldn't be in the shape I am today. I would have gotten a better education."

A 72-year-old, black, retired farm worker in Society Hill, South Carolina said she "would have gotten a place and put down on it for my old age -- a house I really liked and not a shack like I got now."

A 72-year-old, full-time proprietor in St. Louis "would have saved more money or at least tried hard to build up for now. It was just bad management."

All in all, older people have their greatest regrets about not having planned better financially, 26% of those surveyed mentioned that, if they could have known when they were younger what things would be like today, they would have tried to save more, gotten more insurance, have invested more in property or land, or other types of investments. In addition, 14% would have tried to get more education, while 9% would have gotten a different or better job either for higher pay, a better pension or Social Security.

Observation:

While old age had turned out to be worse than expected for only one in ten older people, and better than expected for three times that many, most people 65 and over have some regrets about not planning better for their later years. The regrets are primarily in the financial area, although many older people wished that they had received a better education or had planned their career differently in order to guarantee themselves greater security in their old age.

Q.9c

THINGS WOULD HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY TO PREPARE FOR LATER YEARS
IF COULD HAVE KNOWN WHEN YOUNGER WHAT THINGS WOULD BE LIKE TODAY

	Public 65 Years and Over %
More Savings and Investments	26
Would have tried to save more money	18
Would have gotten insurance, more insurance	2
Would have invested in land, bought more property	2
Would have bought a home	2
Would have made more, better investments	2
Education: Would have tried to get more, better education	14
Different, better job	9
Would have gotten a different, better, higher paying job	6
Would have gotten a job with a better pension, retirement plan, social security	2
Wouldn't have worked so hard, denied myself pleasure	1
Would have planned ahead; never thought about getting old	3
Health; would have taken better care of my health	2
Wouldn't have married at all, so soon, again	2
Would have moved to another place, town, state	2
Would have made more friends, gone out more with people	1
Would have learned hobbies, kept busier	1
Would have been more religious	1
Would have tried to accomplish more	1
Would have travelled more	1
Would have had more children, adopted children	1
Nothing	43
Couldn't have done things differently due to lack of money time, education	4
Couldn't have foreseen problems (e.g., inflation, energy crisis)	1
Nothing; wouldn't change anything	38
All other answers	6
Don't know	8

SECTION V:

THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING OLDER

Sections I and II of this report focused primarily on the public perceptions of old age and older people, that is, on the discrepancies that exist between the way the public expect old age to be and the way older people experience their later years personally. For the purposes of that comparison, older people were treated as a homogeneous group with one key factor in common: they had all passed their sixty-fifty birthday.

Yet, while society tends to view older people as a homogeneous entity, the findings of this study underscore not their homogeneity but rather their differences. While older people as a group may not suffer as seriously as the public thinks from a host of problems, both economic and psychological, certain sub-groups of older people suffer far more seriously than others. Similarly, while the public 65 and over themselves have a far better self-image than the image attributed to them by the public at large, certain groups of older people have lower self-esteem than others. Similarly, measures of general life satisfaction among older people and overall psychological well-being differentiate older people rather than unite them, in the same way that these same measures point out the differences among various groups of young people.

In other words, there appears to be no such thing as the typical experience of old age, nor the typical older person. At no point in one's life does a person stop being himself and suddenly turn into an "old person," with all the myths and stereotypes that that term involves. Instead, the social, economic and psychological factors that affect individuals when they were younger, often stay with them throughout their lives. Older people share with each other their chronological age, but factors more powerful than age alone determine the conditions of their later years.

Seriousness of Problems for People 65 and Over

In determining the security and comfort with which older people live their lives, income plays a key role. While no more than a third of older people in any income group identify any of the problems tested as very serious, the lowest income group (the 23% of older people with household incomes under $3,000) suffer much more seriously from every problem than the more affluent:

Q.6b(1)

"VERY SERIOUS" PROBLEMS FOR PUBLIC 65 AND OVER PERSONALLY (BY INCOME)

	Public 65 and Over					
	Total	Under $3,000	$3,000-$6,999	$7,000-$14,999	$15,000 and Over	Number of People (In millions)
	%	%	%	%	%	#
Fear of crime	23	31	20	21	17	4.8
Poor health	21	36	21	9	11	4.4
Not having enough money to live on	15	32	13	5	1	3.1
Loneliness	12	23	11	4	4	2.6
Not enough medical care	10	18	9	5	1	2.0
Not enough education	8	15	7	3	5	1.7
Not feeling needed	7	12	7	4	2	1.5
Not enough to do to keep busy	6	10	6	1	*	1.2
Not enough job opportunities	5	8	6	2	4	1.1
Not enough friends	5	7	4	3	1	.9
Poor housing	4	9	3	1	-	.8
Not enough clothing	3	6	2	1	-	.5

*Less than 0.5%

Observation:

The elderly poor have a far harder time coping with life than those with higher incomes. Not only do the older poor have more difficulty making ends meet financially, in securing adequate medical care, housing and clothing, but their low economic position also appears to increase dramatically their sense of loneliness and rejection by society. Serious health problems, increased fear of crime, limited budgets, etc. decrease severely the mobility of the older poor and heighten their feelings of isolation. For about one in three elderly poor, serious health problems, not enough money and fear of crime make life a difficult struggle indeed.

A further look at the findings reveal, however, that it is not only the elderly poor who suffer most seriously from all the problems discussed above. It is the poor in general, regardless of age. In fact, with the exception of poor health, the older poor (that is, those with incomes of under $7,000) are no more keenly aware of these problems than are the young in the same income bracket and sometimes less aware of them.

-- Twenty-seven percent of those 18 to 54 with incomes under $7,000 identified fear of crime as a very serious problem for them personally, compared with a like 24% of people 65 and over with the same income.

-- Similarly, 10% of the younger group with incomes under $7,000 said they personally suffer seriously from not feeling needed, compared with a like 9% of those 65 and over with comparable incomes.

-- In some areas, however, the young with incomes under $7,000 appear to have more serious problems than older people with the same incomes. Forty-four percent of those 18 to 54 at that income level identified not having enough money to live on as a very serious problem, for example, compared with only 20% of those 65 and over with comparable incomes.

Q.6a,b

"VERY SERIOUS" PROBLEMS OF PUBLIC PERSONALLY (BY INCOME)

	Total Public			
	Total %	18-54 %	55-64 %	65 and Over %
Not having enough money to live on				
Under $7,000	35	44	41	20
$7,000-$14,999	15	17	11	5
$15,000 and over	8	8	6	1
Fear of crime				
Under $7,000	25	27	24	24
$7,000-$14,999	15	14	18	21
$15,000 and over	9	9	9	17
Poor health				
Under $7,000	24	18	35	26
$7,000-$14,999	8	7	15	9
$15,000 and over	7	6	11	11
Poor housing				
Under $7,000	12	16	13	5
$7,000-$14,999	5	6	2	1
$15,000 and over	3	4	2	-
Not feeling needed				
Under $7,000	10	10	13	9
$7,000-$14,999	4	4	3	4
$15,000 and over	4	4	6	2

Observation:

Income plays a far greater role than age in determining the seriousness of a host of problems in people's lives. Not only do older people feel the burden of various problems no more keenly than the young; in many areas, the old are much less likely than the young to feel the impact of many problems. At the same income level, for example, the young are far more dissatisfied with their ability to make ends meet financially and with poor housing conditions than are their elders. As discussed earlier in the report, this difference may be explained either by the more modest needs of older people or by their more modest expectations.

Along with income, race is a key determinant in the security and comfort that older people enjoy in life. In every problem area except one (not enough education), the elderly black feel far more burdened by very serious problems than do the elderly white:

Q.6b(2)

"VERY SERIOUS" PROBLEMS FOR PUBLIC 65 AND OVER PERSONALLY (BY RACE)

	Public 65 and Over	
	White	Black
	%	%
Fear of crime	21	41
Poor health	20	35
Not having enough money to live on	12	43
Loneliness	11	23
Not enough medical care	8	26
Not enough education	6	7
Not enough to do to keep busy	5	12
Not enough friends	4	8
Not enough job opportunities	4	15
Poor housing	2	18
Not enough clothing	2	11

The income differences between older blacks and older whites explain in part why older blacks have more serious problems than older whites. Yet, even within the same income range, older blacks report far more serious problems than older whites. A full 51% of blacks with incomes under $3,000 said

that not having enough money to live on was a very serious problem for them personally, for example, compared with only 26% of older whites with comparable incomes who felt the same. Similarly, a full 33% of older blacks with incomes of $3,000 to $6,999 said they suffer very seriously from fear of crime, while only 18% of older whites with similar incomes responded that way.

Q.6b(3)

"VERY SERIOUS" PROBLEMS FOR PUBLIC 65 AND OVER PERSONALLY
(BY RACE WITHIN INCOME)

	Under $3,000		$3,000 to $6,999	
	White	Black	White	Black
	%	%	%	%
Fear of crime	28	44	18	33
Poor health	34	42	20	28
Not having enough money to live on	26	51	11	30
Loneliness	22	27	10	18
Not enough medical care	13	33	8	20
Not feeling needed	11	15	6	8
Not enough to do to keep busy	8	18	5	10
Not enough friends	6	9	3	6
Not enough jobs, opportunities	6	17	5	13
Poor housing	6	22	2	13
Not enough clothing	4	13	1	9

Observation:

Current income alone is not an adequate indicator of financial security. As mentioned earlier, older blacks are more likely than older whites to have been poor all their lives and to have fewer assets (ranging from their own homes to health insurance policies). While the findings show that older blacks are more likely than older whites to turn to their children or grandchildren for financial assistance, their offspring are also less likely than younger whites to be in the financial position to help them much.* Furthermore, older blacks at low income levels are more likely than older whites at the same income level to live in neighborhoods with serious strains from all age groups on available social services. It is perhaps for this reason that older blacks with incomes under $3,000 are more likely than older whites at comparable income levels to complain of inadequate medical care. As the following results show, the problems of older blacks are to a large extent the problems of blacks in general, regardless of age.

It was concluded above, that poverty, not old age, creates very serious problems in people's lives and that the poor young suffer just as much as the poor old, if not more. In the same way, race appears to be more responsible for very serious problems than does age. With the exception of poor health, which afflicts older blacks more than younger blacks, blacks 18 to 64 are afflicted with the same problems as blacks 65 and over, and sometimes more seriously. In every area, blacks of all ages suffer problems much more severely than whites:

-- Forty-one percent of blacks 18 to 64 considered not having enough money to live on a very serious problem for them personally, compared with a like 43% of blacks 65 and over. Only 14% of whites of all ages, however, complained of the same problem.

*The median 1973 household income for whites 18 to 64 was $13,300, compared with a lower $7,700 for blacks.

-- Similarly, 16% of blacks under 65 said that not feeling needed was a very serious problem for them personally, compared with a close 12% of blacks 65 and over. Only 4% of whites of all ages (and 7% of whites 65 and over) considered this a very serious problem for themselves.

-- While poor health is a more serious problem for older blacks than younger blacks, poor housing is more serious for younger blacks: 29% of blacks under 65 identified poor housing as a very serious problem for them personally, while only 18% of older blacks did the same. Poor housing was identified as very serious for only 3% of all whites, however.

"VERY SERIOUS" PROBLEMS FOR PUBLIC PERSONALLY (BY RACE)

	Total Public		
	Total	18 to 64	65 and Over
	%	%	%
Not having enough money to live on			
White	14	14	12
Black	41	41	43
Fear of crime			
White	12	10	21
Black	43	43	43
Poor health			
White	10	9	20
Black	20	18	35
Poor housing			
White	3	3	2
Black	27	29	18
Not feeling needed			
White	4	3	7
Black	15	16	12

Observation:

Once again, age appears to be a less important variable than other demographics, in this case, race. Like younger blacks, older blacks report far more serious problems than whites of all ages. White age may magnify the health problem, it in no way appears to increase the seriousness of other problems. If anything, older blacks register lower levels of dissatisfaction with their lot in life than younger blacks.

Just as the low income groups suffered more seriously from every problem than the affluent, so do the less well educated older people suffer more seriously on all counts than the college educated. In interpreting these findings, it is worthwhile to note, however, that the same high school or less group represents the majority of people 65 and over (63%), while the college educated group represents a much smaller proportion of older people (7%).

Q.6b

"VERY SERIOUS"PROBLEMS FOR PUBLIC 65 AND OVER PERSONALLY (BY EDUCATION)

	Public 65 and Over			
	Total	Some High School or Less	High School Graduate/ Some College	College Graduate
	%	%	%	%
Fear of crime	23	25	23	10
Poor health	21	26	14	9
Not having enough money to live on	15	20	8	3
Loneliness	12	15	9	6
Not enough medical care	10	13	5	5
Not enough education	8	12	2	1
Not feeling needed	7	9	5	2
Not enough to do to keep busy	6	7	4	2
Not enough friends	5	5	3	2
Not enough job opportunities	5	7	3	4
Poor housing	4	5	2	1
Not enough clothing	3	4	1	-

Just as higher education appears to relieve the problems of older people, so does it play the same role for the younger public. A much smaller proportion of the younger public than the older public, however, achieved less than a high school degree: while 63% of the older public never graduated from high school, a lower 26% of those under 65 fall into the lowest educational group.

Among those with no high school degree, the 65 and over group suffers more seriously than those 18 to 64 from poor health, fear of crime, and loneliness, while the younger group suffers more seriously than those 65 and over from not having enough money, poor housing, and not enough education.

Q.6b

"VERY SERIOUS" PROBLEMS OF PUBLIC PERSONALLY (BY EDUCATION)

	Total Public			
	Total %	18-54 %	55-64 %	65 and Over %
Not having enough money to live on				
Some high school or less	26	28	29	20
High school graduate, some college	15	17	12	8
College graduate	8	9	10	3
Fear of crime				
Some high school or less	21	18	25	25
High school graduate, some college	11	14	11	23
College graduate	9	8	15	10
Poor health				
Some high school or less	21	14	28	26
High school graduate, some college	9	8	14	14
College graduate	4	3	17	9
Not enough education				
Some high school or less	14	17	11	12
High school graduate, some college	4	5	2	2
College graduate	1	1	-	1
Loneliness				
Some high school or less	12	10	15	15
High school graduate, some college	6	6	9	9
College graduate	4	4	4	6
Poor housing				
Some high school or less	9	13	7	5
High school graduate, some college	6	6	5	2
College graduate	1	1	2	1
Not feeling needed				
Some high school or less	8	8	9	9
High school graduate, some college	5	4	7	5
College graduate	1	2	-	2

In only a few areas does sex appear to affect the degree to which older people suffer from various problems:

-- Older women tend more than older men to report fear of crime as a very serious problem, but then again younger women were more likely than younger men to do the same.

-- Loneliness appears to be a second problem which afflicts older women somewhat more seriously than older men, and not surprisingly, since more women than men 65 and over are widowed.

-- Older men are slightly more likely to complain of not enough job opportunities than older women. Differences between men and women at all ages are minimal, however.

-- Poor housing appears to be a greater problem for younger women than for younger men. Older men and women appear to suffer from poor housing in comparable numbers.

Q.6b(5)

"VERY SERIOUS" PROBLEMS FOR PUBLIC PERSONALLY (BY SEX)

	Total Public			
	Total %	18-54 %	55-64 %	65 and Over %
Fear of crime				
Men	11	9	18	17
Women	20	10	18	28
Not enough job opportunities				
Men	10	10	10	8
Women	11	13	7	4
Loneliness				
Men	7	5	12	10
Women	9	8	11	15
Poor housing				
Men	4	3	8	3
Women	8	10	4	4

All in all, then, key demographics such as income, race, sex and education are more important indicators of serious problems than age.

Only three problems stand out as more serious for the older public 80 and over than for those in their late 60's; poor health, loneliness, and

not feeling needed. On the whole, however, age differences among those 65 and over are minimal.

Q.6B(4)

"VERY SERIOUS" PROBLEMS FOR PUBLIC 65 AND OVER PERSONALLY (BY AGE)

	Public 65 and Over			
	Total %	65-69 %	70-79 %	80 and Over %
Fear of crime	23	21	26	19
Poor health	21	18	22	28
Not having enough money to live on	15	17	15	12
Loneliness	12	10	13	17
Not enough medical care	10	10	10	9
Not enough education	8	8	9	7
Not feeling needed	7	5	8	11
Not enough to do to keep busy	6	4	6	8
Not enough friends	5	4	5	5
Not enough job opportunities	5	7	6	3
Poor housing	4	4	4	2
Not enough clothing	3	2	3	3

In only three areas do older people, as a group, appear to suffer more serious problems than the young: fear of crime, poor health and loneliness. Yet even in these areas where the results do vary somewhat by age, they vary far more dramatically by income and race.

"VERY SERIOUS" PROBLEMS FOR PUBLIC 65 AND OVER PERSONALLY COMPARED WITH PUBLIC 18 to 64

	Total Public		
	18-64	65 and Over	Net Difference
	%	%	
Not having enough money to live on	18	15	-3
Fear of crime	15	23	+8
Not enough job opportunities	11	5	-6
Poor health	10	21	+11
Not enough medical care	9	10	+1
Not enough education	7	8	+1
Poor housing	7	4	-3
Loneliness	7	12	+5
Not feeling needed	5	7	+2
Not enough friends	4	5	+1
Not enough to do to keep busy	4	6	+2
Not enough clothing	4	3	-1

Observation:

Insubjective terms, the old do not view their lot in life as any worse than the young view theirs. Apart from more serious health problems, greater fear of crime, and, to a less extent more loneliness, older people as a group feel no more burdened than do younger people by problems of not enough money, not enough medical care, not enough education, poor housing, not feeling needed, not enough friends,not enough to do to keep busy, and not enough clothing.

In objective terms, the findings show that there are in fact economic differences between the young and the old and that the median household income of those under 65 ($12,400) is much higher than that of those 65 and over ($4,800). Fewer dependents to support, fewer needs and/or lower expectations, however, cause the low income elderly to be less troubled than the low income young by their economic position.

In another area, mobility, the older public appears to have more problems than the young. Danger of being robbed or attacked on the street, difficulty in walking and climbing stairs and general health appear to represent more serious obstacles to the older public than to the young in getting where they want to go.

Q.17a,b

"VERY SERIOUS" PROBLEMS IN GETTING WHERE YOU WANT TO GO:
PUBLIC 65 AND OVER COMPARED WITH PUBLIC 18 TO 64

	Public 18-64 %	Public 65 and Over %	Net Difference %
Danger of being robbed or attacked on the street	14	24	+10
Not having a car or being able to drive	9	14	+ 5
No buses or subways available for where you want to go	8	15	+ 7
Your general health	6	20	+14
The cost of buses and subways	5	9	+ 4
Difficulty in walking and climbing stairs	5	22	+17
Other problems	26	24	- 2

Moreover, mobility problems appear to be more serious among the 80 and over group than among those in their late 60's

Q.17a (1)

"VERY SERIOUS" PROBLEMS FOR PUBLIC 65 AND OVER
IN GETTING WHERE THEY WANT TO GO

	Public 65 and Over			
	Total %	65-69 %	70-79 %	80 and Over %
Difficulty in walking and climbing stairs	22	16	22	34
Your general health	20	15	20	28
Not having a car or being able to drive	14	12	14	17

Nevertheless, income plays an important role in determining mobility for all age groups. In fact, with the exception of difficulty in walking and climbing stairs (which becomes a much greater problem with age), income affects mobility even more dramatically than does age. Twenty-two percent of those 18 to 54 with incomes under $7,000 said not having a car or being able to drive is a very serious problem for them, for example, compared with only 4% of the same age group with incomes of $15,000 or more. Similarly, not having a car or being able to drive is very serious for 17% of the 65 and over group with incomes under $7,000, but for only 3% of the affluent elderly (with incomes of $15,000 or more).

Q17a,b(1)

"VERY SERIOUS PROBLEMS IN GETTING WHERE YOU WANT TO GO (BY INCOME)

	Total Public			
	Total %	18-54 %	55-64 %	65 and Over %
Danger of being robbed or attacked on the street				
Under $7,000	24	22	23	27
$7,000 to $14,999	16	15	17	17
$15,000 and over	8	8	8	15
Not having a car or being able to drive				
Under $7,000	19	22	16	17
$7,000 to $14,999	7	7	6	7
$15,000 and over	4	4	4	3
Your general health				
Under $7,000	19	13	25	24
$7,000 to $14,999	6	4	10	8
$15,000 and over	2	1	5	11
Difficulty in walking and climbing stairs				
Under $7,000	17	9	21	27
$7,000 to $14,999	6	5	13	9
$15,000 and over	1	*	3	13
No buses or subways available for where you want to go				
Under $7,000	14	10	15	17
$7,000 to $14,999	8	7	11	11
$15,000 and over	6	5	10	3
The cost of buses and subways				
Under $7,000	12	13	13	10
$7,000 to $14,999	5	5	4	4
$15,000 and over	2	2	3	2

Self-Image of the Public 65 and Over

While the public 65 and over tends to see themselves as individuals in a far more positive light than the public at large sees most people over 65, the self-esteem of older people varies noticeably by key demographic variables.

In four of the seven image areas tested, income has little affect on how older people view themselves: comparable numbers of the least affluent among those 65 and over see themselves as very friendly and warm, very wise from experience, very bright and alert and very open-minded and adaptable. In determining older people's self-image of their mental capacities, therefore, income plays no role at all. In determining their self-image about their physical capabilities, however, income plays a more important role. The more affluent older people are more likely than the less affluent to see themselves as very good at getting things done, very physically active, and very sexually active.

Observation:

The lower self-image held by the least affluent older people in the area of physical activity reflects their more serious problems of poor health and decreased mobility. While they see themselves generally as being as mentally sound as do the more affluent public 65 and over, they clearly do not see themselves as being as physically fit.

Q.4a,b(1e)

SELF-IMAGE OF PUBLIC 65 AND OVER (BY INCOME)

	Public 65 and Over				
	Total	Under $3,000	$3,000 to $6,999	$7,000 to $14,999	$15,000 and Over
	%	%	%	%	%
Very friendly and warm	72	73	73	70	72
Very wise from experience	69	67	70	73	72
Very bright and alert	68	61	68	76	69
Very open-minded and adaptable	63	59	62	67	61
Very good at getting things done	55	47	53	67	61
Very physically active	48	37	46	62	59
Very sexually active	11	7	10	16	16

The pattern found among the older public exists among the younger public as well, but to a less extent. Sixty percent of those 18 to 54 with incomes under $7,000 view themselves as very physically active, compared with a higher 69% of people that age with incomes of $15,000 and over. The differences in physical activity between the less and the more affluent are more dramatic, however, among the public 65 and over:

Q.4a,b

SELF-IMAGE OB PUBLIC (BY INCOME)

	Total Public			
	Total %	18-54 %	55-64 %	65 and Over %
Very warm and friendly				
Under $7,000	68	64	69	73
$7,000 to $14,999	62	59	73	70
$15,000 and over	64	63	67	72
Very bright and alert				
Under $7,000	65	67	58	65
$7,000 to $14,999	74	75	72	76
$15,000 and over	75	74	82	69
Very open-minded and adaptable				
Under $7,000	64	67	59	61
$7,000 to $14,999	67	68	64	67
$15,000 and over	68	67	71	68
Very wise from experience				
Under $7,000	61	52	65	69
$7,000 to $14,999	56	51	74	73
$15,000 and over	53	50	72	72
Very good at getting things done				
Under $7,000	53	53	57	50
$7,000 to $14,999	57	56	63	67
$15,000 and over	66	66	72	61
Very physically active				
Under $7,000	51	60	45	43
$7,000 to $14,999	65	66	66	62
$15,000 and over	69	69	67	59
Very sexually active				
Under $7,000	26	41	20	9
$7,000 to $14,999	46	52	30	16
$15,000 and over	49	53	29	16

Observation:

While the discrepancies between the lower and upper income elderly in the area of physical activity reflect in large part their health differences, the tendency of the more affluent young to see themselves as more physically active than the less affluent young probably reflects the former's greater accessibility to recreational facilities and their likelihood to have more leisure time for recreation and sports.

In almost every area whites 65 and over tend to have a more positive image of themselves than do blacks 65 and over. Sixty-nine percent of older whites see themselves as very bright and alert, compared with only 54% of older blacks. Similarly, 56% of older whites view themselves as very good at getting things done, compared with only 45% of older blacks. In only two areas does the self-image of older blacks measure up to that of older whites: both groups see themselves as being equally friendly and warm and equally sexually active.

Q.4a,b(1j)

SELF-IMAGE OF PUBLIC 65 AND OVER (BY RACE)

	Public 65 and Over		
	Total	White	Black
	%	%	%
Very friendly and warm	72	73	69
Very wise from experience	69	70	63
Very bright and alert	68	69	54
Very open-minded and adaptable	63	64	51
Very good at getting things done	55	56	45
Very physically active	48	50	31
Very sexually active	11	10	11

Some of these same differences exist between younger blacks and whites, but to a much lesser extent. Seventy-three percent of whites 18 to 64 see themselves as very bright and alert, compared with a lower 65% of blacks 18 to 64. In some areas, however, younger blacks match younger whites in self-esteem: 60% of whites 18 to 64 see themselves as very good at getting things done, compared with a comparable 61% of blacks.

Q.4ab

SELF-IMAGE OF PUBLIC (BY RACE)

	Total Public		
	Total %	White %	Black %
Very bright and alert			
18 to 64	73	73	65
65 and over	68	69	54
Very physically active			
18 to 64	65	66	59
65 and over	48	50	31
Very good at getting things done			
18 to 64	60	60	61
65 and over	55	56	45

Observation:

These findings suggest that recent progress toward racial equality and movements to raise black consciousness and pride have successfully elevated the self-image of younger blacks. The self esteem of older blacks, however, remains far lower than that of older whites.

Better educated older people appear to have more positive self-images than do the less well educated, both in the area of mental and physical activity. Sixty-four percent of people 65 and over whose education ended with some high school or less see themselves as very bright and alert, compared with 73% of those with high school degrees or some college and 81% of college graduates. Similarly, 43% of the least well educated among the older public consider themselves very physically active, compared with a higher 62% of the best educated among them.

Q.4a,b(1h)

SELF-IMAGE OF PUBLIC 65 and OVER (BY EDUCATION)

	Public 65 and Over			
	Total	Some High School or Less	High School Graduate/Some College	College Graduate
	%	%	%	%
Very friendly and warm	72	72	74	70
Very wise from experience	69	60	73	67
Very bright and alert	68	64	73	81
Very open-minded and adaptable	63	59	71	64
Very good at getting things done	55	53	58	62
Very physically active	48	43	55	62
Very sexually active	11	11	11	10

The key variable here appears to be education and not age. Just as 64% of those people 65 and over with some high school or less saw themselves as very bright and alert, so do a like 63% of those 18 to 53 with comparable educational backgrounds:

Q.4a,b(li)

SELF-IMAGE AS "VERY BRIGHT AND ALERT" (BY EDUCATION

	Some High School or Less	High School Graduate/Some College	College Graduate
	%	%	%
Total Public	63	76	77
18-54	63	76	78
55-64	63	79	69
65 and over	64	73	81

Observation:

Current income and education tend not to correlate as highly among the older public as among the younger public. Retirement tends to wash out income differences among older people, while differences in educational background remain. For that reason, it is not surprising that education appears to influence older people's image of their own mental capacities far more than income does. In any case, however, self-esteem appears to vary significantly by educational background but not by age. As the older public becomes an increasingly better educated sector of the population, self-esteem among the elderly may diminish significantly as a problem in the future.

Finally, in only one area does sex appear to have an impact on older people's self-image. In the area of being sexually active: 16% of men 65 and over consider themselves very sexually active, compared with only 7% of women. The difference between men and women on this count is much smaller among younger people: 54% of men 18 to 54 felt they were very sexually active, compared with a close 47% of women.

Q.4a,b(1c)

SELF-IMAGE OF PUBLIC 65 AND OVER (BY SEX)

	Public 65 and Over		
	Total %	Men %	Women %
Very friendly and warm	72	69	74
Very wise from experience	69	72	68
Very bright and alert	68	68	68
Very open-minded and adaptable	63	62	64
Very good at getting things done	55	54	56
Very physically active	48	48	48
Very sexually active	11	16	7

Q.4a,b(1d)

SELF-IMAGE AS "VERY SEXUALLY ACTIVE" (BY SEX)

	Men %	Women %
Total Public	47	37
18-54	54	47
55-64	34	20
65 and over	16	7

Observation:

It is worthwhile to note that seeing oneself as sexually active ranks lower than the other traits tested at all stages in life.

That older men appear more active sexually than older women is not surprising, since women 65 and over are much more likely to be widowed than men (53% of older women are widowed, compared with only 15% of older men) while men 65 and over are much more likely to be married (78% of older men

are married and only 39% of older women). In any case, with 11% of people 65 and over calling themselves very sexually active and 22% somewhat sexually active (and another 15% not sure how to answer the question) the myth of older people losing interest in the opposite sex can be laid to rest. In fact, interest in sex can be assured to run much higher than sexual activity itself, since many older people find themselves without mates in their later years.

Life Satisfaction of Public 65 and Over

The general life satisfaction of the older public in this country was measured by administering to those surveyed a series of statements developed by Dr. Robert Havighurst, called the Life Satisfaction Index Z. The Index consists of 18 statements to which both the public 65 and over and the public 18 to 64 were asked to agree or disagree. Administered to both the younger public and the older public, this series allows comparisons between the young and old on general life satisfaction.

On the majority of statements tested, the public 18 to 65 and the public 65 and over responded similarly. On seven statements, however, differences of at least ten percentage points emerged between the responses of the public 18 to 64 and those 65 and over:

-- Eighty-six percent of the younger public agreed that "I expect some interesting and pleasant things to happen to me in the future," compared with a lower 57% (but still a majority) of those 65 and over.

-- Eighty-two percent of those 18 to 64 felt "The things I do are as interesting to me as they ever were," compared with 72% of those 65 and over. (Again, however, three out of four older people agreed that life is still as interesting as ever.)

Seventy-one percent of the younger public agreed "I've made plans for things I'll be doing a month or a year from now," compared with a lower 53% of those 65 and over. It is worth noting, however, that a majority of older people are still planning for their future.

-- Sixty-eight percent of the public 18 to 64, compared with a lower 56% (but still a majority) of those 65 and over feel "I am just as happy as when I was younger."

-- To only one positive statement did less than a majority of older people agree: "These are the best years of my life." Thirty-two percent of those 65 and over agreed that these are their best years, compared with 56% of the younger public.

-- Differences between the young and the old emerged on two of the negative statements as well. Forty-six percent of the older public agreed that they "feel old and somewhat tired," compared with 21% of those under 65.

-- Twenty-three percent of older people agreed, "This is the dreariest time of my life," compared with only 13% of those under 65.

Observation:

While only one in three older people consider these to be the best years of their life, majorities of those 65 and over agreed with all the positive statements in the series. Not only do four in five older people look back on their past with satisfaction, three in four feel that their present is as interesting as it ever was, and over half are making plans for their future. Granted, life could be happier for 45% of older people, but an even higher 49% of those under 65 feel the same.

Employment status appears to affect the overall life satisfaction of older people. A full 72% of the employed public 65 and over expect some

interesting and pleasant things to happen to them, compared with 52% of the retired public 65 and over. It is worth noting that the retired public 65 and over is substantially older than the employed 65 and over group.

Q.16

EFFECT OF RETIREMENT ON LIFE SATISFACTION

	Public 65 and Over	
	Employed (12%) %	Retired (63%) %
Positive Statements		
The things I do are as interesting to me as they ever were	86	70
I expect some interesting and pleasant things to happen to me in the future	72	52
These are the best years of my life	41	32
Negative Statements		
I feel old and somewhat tired	34	47
Most of the things I do are boring or monotonous	6	15

Q.16(1)

AGREEMENT WITH LIFE SATISFACTION STATEMENTS
("Agree"s only)

	Public 18-64 %	Public 65 and Over %	Net Difference %
Positive Statements			
I expect some interesting and pleasant things to happen to me in the future	86	57	-29
As I look back on my life, I am fairly well satisfied	85	87	+ 2
Compared to other people my age, I make a good appearance	85	83	- 2
The things I do are as interesting to me as they ever were	82	72	-10
I've gotten pretty much what I expected out of life	80	82	+ 2
I have made plans for things I'll be doing a month or a year from now	71	53	-18
I am just as happy as when I was younger	68	56	-12
As I grow older, things seem better than I thought they would be	67	64	- 3
I have gotten more of the breaks in life than most of the people I know	59	63	+ 4
I would not change my past life even if I could	56	62	+ 6
These are the best years of my life	56	32	-24
Negative Statements			
My life could be happier than it is now	49	45	- 4
In spite of what some people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse, not better	37	34	- 3
When I think back over my life, I didn't get most of the important things I wanted	24	32	+ 8
I feel old and somewhat tired	21	46	+25
Compared to other people, I get down in the dumps too often	14	13	- 1
This is the dreariest time of my life	13	23	+10
Most of the things I do are boring or monotonous	12	14	+ 2

Q.16

AGREEMENT WITH LIFE SATISFACTION STATEMENTS

	Public 65 and Over		
	Agree %	Disagree %	Not Sure %
Positive Statements			
As I look back on my life, I am fairly well satisfied	87	10	3
Compared to other people my age, I make a good appearance	83	6	11
I've gotten pretty much what I expected out of life	82	12	6
The things I do are as interesting to me as they ever were	72	24	4
As I grow older, things seem better than I thought they would be	64	26	10
I have gotten more of the breaks in life than most of the people I know	63	27	10
I would not change my past life even if I could	62	29	9
I expect some interesting and pleasant things to happen to me in the future	57	26	17
I am just as happy as when I was younger	56	38	6
I have made plans for things I'll be doing a month or a year from now	53	43	6
These are the best years of my life	32	38	10
Negative Statements			
I feel old and somewhat tired	46	50	4
My life could be happier than it is now	45	46	9
In spite of what some people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse, not better	34	45	21
When I look back over my life, I didn't get most of the important I wanted	32	61	7
This is the dreariest time of my life	23	72	5
Most of the things I do are boring or monotonous	14	82	4
Compared to other people, I get down in the dumps too often	13	81	6

An index was developed based on the 18 statements discussed previously, according to the following scoring procedure:

- 2 points were given to each agreement with a positive statement or disagreement with a negative statement.
- 1 point was given for each "not sure" or no answer.
- 0 point was given for each disagreement with a positive statement or agreement with a negative statement.

The scale ranged from 0 to 36. The median score for the public 18 to 64 was 28.3, only slightly higher than the mean 26.0 for the public 65 and over.

Q.1b

LIFE SATISFACTION SCALE

Score	Total Public %	Public 18-64 %	Public 65 and Over %
0	*	*	*
1-3	*	*	*
4-6	*	*	3
7-9	1	1	3
10-12	4	3	4
13-15	4	4	6
16-18	5	4	8
19-21	7	7	9
22-24	12	12	12
25-27	13	12	15
28-30	19	21	19
31-33	19	20	11
34-36	16	16	10
Mean	26.4	26.7	24.4
Median	28.0	28.3	26.0

Among the older public, median scores do drop by age, however: 27.4 for those 65 to 69, 25.7 for those 70 to 79, and 23.8 for those 80 and over.

Q.16

MEDIAN LIFE SATISFACTION SCORES FOR PUBLIC 65 AND OVER

Total	26.0
65 to 69	27.4
70 to 79	25.7
80 and over	23.8
Men	26.3
Women	25.8
Under $3,000	22.7
$3,000 to $6,999	25.9
$7,000 to $14,999	28.5
$15,000 and over	29.4
Some high school or less	24.6
High school grad/some college	27.8
College graduate	29.7
White	26.3
Black	23.3
Blacks under $2,000	21.6
Blacks $2,000 to $3,999	23.3
Blacks $4,000 and over	26.4
Under $3,000	
White	23.3
Black	21.7
$3,000 to $6,999	
White	26.9
Black	26.1

Other demographic factors appear to have a greater influence on general life satisfaction than age, however. Median life satisfaction scores vary much more dramatically by income, for example. The total public with incomes under $7,000 emerged with a median life satisfaction score of 24.2, compared with a higher 29.8 among those with incomes of $15,000 and over. Within each income range, the score of those 65 and over was not significantly lower than that of the public 18 to 54.

Q.16(1)

MEDIAN LIFE SATISFACTION SCORES (BY INCOME)

	Under $7,000 %	$7,000-$14,999 %	$15,000 and Over %
Total Public	24.2	28.3	29.8
18-54	24.0	28.4	29.8
55-64	23.4	25.8	28.1
65 and over	23.3	27.4	28.0

Race also appears to have a more significant effect on life satisfaction than age. The white public 65 and over had a median score of 26.3, compared with a score of 23.3 for blacks 65 and over. Blacks with incomes under $2,000 received an even lower 21.6 score, compared with 26.4 for blacks with incomes of $4,000 and over. The differences between blacks and whites appear to be more related to income than to any inherent racial differences; in the same income range ($3,000 to $6,999), older blacks and older whites received nearly identical scores on the index:

Q.16(2)

MEDIAN LIFE SATISFACTION SCORES (BY RACE)

	White %	Black %
Total Public	28.3	24.9
18-64	28.8	25.1
65 and over	26.3	23.3
65 and over with incomes of $3,000-$6,999	26.0	26.1

General life satisfaction is higher for those of all ages who are employed than those who are not employed. This difference becomes most noticeable among older people: the median score for people 65 and over who are employed was 28.6, compared with a lower 25.8 for those who are not employed and a like 25.8 for those retired.

Q.16(3)

MEDIAN LIFE SATISFACTION SCORES
(BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS)

	Employed	Not Employed	Retired
Total Public	28.9	27.0	26.2
18-54	29.2	27.8	X
55-64	28.0	26.3	26.3
65 and over	28.6	25.8	25.8

Education also appears to play a major role in determining overall life satisfaction. The public with some high school or less received a significantly lower score than college graduates.

Q.16(4)

MEDIAN LIFE SATISFACTION SCORES (BY EDUCATION)

	Some High School or Less	High School Graduate/ Some College	College Graduate
Total Public	24.9	29.1	29.7
18-54	25.0	29.4	29.8
55-64	25.0	29.3	28.8
65 and over	24.6	27.8	29.7

Observation:

All in all, the older public seems to be only slightly less satisfied with their life -- past, present and future -- than do those under 65, although people 80 and over are somewhat less satisfied than those who have recently passed their sixty-fifth birthday. On the whole, however, income, education, and employment status appear to have far greater effects on overall life satisfaction than does age. Blacks register much lower levels of satisfaction than do whites, but the differences appear to be more related to income than to race.

There is no question that one's general satisfaction with his own life affects one's views of the world as a whole and, moreover, his view of specific groups of people. In evaluating most older people, that portion of the public with the highest life satisfaction scores were also more positive in evaluating older people as evidenced by higher scores on the image scale of most people over 65, discussed in Section II of this report. This difference is most dramatic among the older public themselves: older people with high life satisfaction scores received a median score of 11.1 on the image scale of most people over 65, compared with a lower 8.3 received by older people who are less satisfied with their own lives.

Q.4, 16

MEDIAN SCORE ON IMAGE OF "MOST PEOPLE OVER 65" SCALE
(BY LIFE SATISFACTION)

	High Life Satisfaction	Moderate Life Satisfaction	Low Life Satisfaction
Total Public	10.3	9.9	9.5
Public 18 to 64	10.2	9.9	9.7
Public 65 and over	11.1	10.5	8.3

Observation:

As people become more satisfied with their own lives, they also feel less threatened by, and more generous toward, other people as well. Improvement of the quality of life for the less privileged of all ages will inevitably boost society's attitudes toward all minorities, including the fastest growing minority of them all -- the elderly.

Social and Family Involvement of Public 65 and Over

Earlier in the report, it was shown that 60% of the public expect that most people over 65 suffer a very serious problem of loneliness. In fact, however, when the public was asked how serious a problem loneliness is for them personally, the older public professed an only slightly higher degree of loneliness than those under 65: 12% of the former said loneliness was a very serious problem for them personally, compared with 7% of the latter.

Loneliness is indeed a subjective feeling and cannot be measured accurately by objective standards. After all, people often complain that they are surrounded by people and still feel lonely. Nevertheless, this study attempted to construct some objective standard of the degree of contact that people 65 and over, compared with the younger public, have

with friends and family members.

A scale was developed, based on responses to two questions:

(1) Do you have any living (children, brothers or sisters, parents, close friends, or grandparents/grandchildren)?*

(2) When did you last see (any of) your (children, brothers or sisters, parents, close friends, or grandparents/ grandchildren)?

The results to these two questions were the following:

---

* The public 18 to 64 were asked if they have any living grandparents, while those 65 and over were asked about living grandchildren. The younger public were never asked, however, about living grandchildren, although some people under 65 certainly have grandchildren.

Q.12a,b

CONTACT WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY
(Base: Have friends/relatives)

	Have	When Last Seen				
		Within Last Day or So (Including Live with)	Within Last Week or Two	A Month Ago	Two to Three Months Ago	Longer Ago than That
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Close Friends						
Public 18 to 64	97	64	30	3	1	2
Public 65 and over	94	60	31	5	2	2
Children						
Public 18 to 64	73	87	8	2	1	2
Public 65 and over	81	55	26	8	3	8
Brothers and Sisters						
Public 18 to 64	91	31	31	12	6	20
Public 65 and over	79	22	22	15	10	31
Parents						
Public 18 to 64	70	48	24	9	5	14
Public 65 and over	4	32	23	8	11	26
Grandchildren						
Public 65 and over	75	46	28	10	5	11
Grandparents						
Public 18 to 64	30	24	20	18	8	30

The Social and Family Contact Scale was developed according to the following scoring procedure:

- 6 points were given for each friend or relative seen within the last day or so (including those living with respondent).
- 5 points were given for each friend or relative seen within the last week or two.
- 4 points were given for each friend or relative seen about a month ago.
- 3 points were given for each friend or relative seen two to three months ago.
- 2 points were given for each friend or relative seen longer ago than that.
- 1 point was given each time the respondent had no friend or relative.

The scale ranged from 0 to 30. The public at large received a median score of 13.3. Scores of the young and old were nearly identical, however: the public 18 to 64 received a median social and family contact score of 13.3, compared with 13.2 for those 65 and over.

SOCIAL AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT SCALE

	Total Public		
	Total %	18-64 %	65 and Over %
0	*	*	1
1-3	1	1	2
4-6	7	7	11
7-9	15	15	14
10-12	20	20	17
13-15	26	27	27
16-18	15	14	19
19-21	13	13	9
22-24	2	2	*
25-27	1	1	*
28-30	-	-	-
Mean	13.2	13.3	12.4
Median	13.3	13.3	13.2

* Less than 0.5%

Q.12a,b

MEDIAN SCORES ON SOCIAL AND FAMILY CONTACT SCALE

Total Public	13.3
18 to 64	13.3
65 and over	13.2
18 to 24	14.6
25 to 39	14.2
40 to 54	13.0
55 to 64	11.6
65 to 69	14.1
70 to 79	13.1
80 and over	11.1

There do not appear to be a significant variations in these results by the key demographic groupings.

MEDIAN SCORES ON SOCIAL AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT SCALE

	Total Public %	18-54 %	55-64 %	65 and Over %
Men	13.3	13.8	11.3	12.8
Women	13.4	13.8	11.9	13.4
Under $7,000	12.5	12.6	10.7	13.1
$7,000 to $14,999	14.0	14.6	12.1	13.8
$15,000 and over	13.1	13.4	11.5	12.3
Some high school or less	13.0	13.6	11.6	12.6
High school grad/some college	13.6	14.0	11.2	12.2
College graduate	13.1	13.3	11.3	11.2
White	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.3
Black	11.6	11.6	11.6	10.6

Observation:

> The value of the Social and Family Contact Scale is limited. The scale does not account for the length of contact with family and friends: the number of different friends, children, siblings, etc., met with, nor the quality of the contact. Nor does the scale take into consideration contact with casual acquaintances, co-workers, shopkeepers, and other people that people have contact with in the course of a day. It is merely an index of the number of contacts the public had had during the preceding months with close friends and family members. Yet, despite its limitations, the scale should nevertheless dispel the myth of lonely and isolated old people, off by themselves with no contact at all with other human beings.

The study used one last approach to measuring the loneliness of people 65 and over, compared with the younger public. Both groups were asked whether there is someone they feel close enough to talk to about things that really bother them. Eight percent of the public 65 and over said they had no one (and 70% of this latter group said they don't feel that it's necessary). A comparable 5% of those under 65 said that they had no one close enough to talk to about the things that really bother them. Not surprisingly, the younger public are more likely to turn to their spouses for such company, while the older, many of whom are widowed, turn to their children more than the young do. For this same reason, men 65 and over talk to their wives much more than older women (many more of whom are widowed) talk to their husbands.

Q.14a

SOMEONE YOU FEEL CLOSE ENOUGH TO
TO TALK ABOUT THINGS THAT REALLY BOTHER YOU

	Total Public	
	18-64	65 and Over
	%	%
On one	5	8
Husband, wife	53	39
Friends	25	24
Parent(s)	15	*
Sister, brother	14	13
Child(ren)	8	12
Clergyman	6	6
Doctor	3	4
Teacher	*	*
Other	6	6
Not sure	1	1

*Less than 0.5%

Q.14b

WHETHER WOULD LIKE TO HAVE SOMEONE YOU COULD TALK TO
ABOUT THINGS THAT REALLY BOTHER YOU
(Base: Have no one feel close enough to talk to)

	Public 18-64 (5%)	Public 65 and Over (8%)
	%	%
Would like to have someone	41	28
Don't think that's necessary	57	70
Not sure	2	2

Concluding Observation:

While the older poor may have much in common with the younger poor, and the older black with the younger black, the results of this study lead time and again to the conclusion that the public 65 and over are in no way a homogeneous group that can be simply dismissed as "old people." Instead, they prove to be a very hetrogeneous group, whose lives, like those of the young, are affected far more by their income, their employment status, their education, and their race than by their age. This message is not the current understanding of the younger or older public. Until older people are recognized as a substantial minority who have only one thing in common -- their age -- the image that the public hold of them will be a distortion of reality to the detriment of all.

Q.14a(1)

SOMEONE YOU FEEL CLOSE ENOUGH TO
TO TALK ABOUT THINGS THAT REALLY BOTHER YOU

	Public 55-64 %	Public 65-69 %	Public 70-79 %	Public 80 and Over %	Public 65 and Over Men %	Public 65 and Over Women %
No one	4	7	8	11	9	7
Husband, wife	61	49	39	20	60	25
Child(ren)	25	25	32	48	22	39
Friends	30	24	25	21	17	29
Sister, brother	16	13	14	8	7	17
Clergyman	8	6	7	6	6	7
Doctor	3	5	4	4	4	5
Parent(s)	2	*	*	*	*	*
Teacher	*	*	*	*	*	*
Other	6	6	5	7	5	6
Not sure	1	1	1	1	1	1

*Less than 0.5%

SECTION VI:

ACCESSIBILITY AND USE OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES
BY PUBLIC 65 AND OVER

Attendance at Various Events and Facilities

Section II of this report revealed a significant discrepancy between how the public expects most people over 65 to spend their time and how the older public say they in fact spend it. On the whole, the public expected older people to spend far more time at sedentary, passive activities like just doing nothing, sitting and thinking, watching television, and sleeping than older people say they spend.

While the older public appear to be equally involved as those under 65 in the activities discussed earlier, it would be misleading however, to conclude that older people have the same mobility as the young. Both economic limitations, and to a lesser extent physical limitations, apparently place a variety of facilities, cultural and artistic events out of the reach of many older people.

The public 65 and over consider a variety of facilities less "convenient" than do those under 65. Eight-eight percent of the younger public said there was a convenient library for them to go to, for example, compared with only 63% of older people who said the same. (The college educated among all age groups, however, are more likely to report a convenient library than the less well educated.) With only four exceptions (the home of a neighbor, the home of a relative, a church or synagogue, and places to shop), the public 65 and over view all the places mentioned as considerably less convenient for them to go to than do those under 65.

Q.27a

CONVENIENCE OF A LIBRARY (BY EDUCATION)

	Some High School or Less %	High School Graduate/ Some College %	College Graduate %
Total Public	68	90	95
18-54	78	92	95
55-64	66	91	96
65 and over	55	76	91

Q.27a

"CONVENIENT" PLACES FOR YOU TO GO

	Total Public		Net Difference
	18-64 %	65 and Over %	
The home of a neighbor	98	94	- 4
A church or synagogue	97	90	- 7
Places to shop	95	86	- 9
A doctor or clinic	95	83	-12
A restaurant	95	79	-18
A library	88	63	-25
A public park	86	60	-26
A movie	86	57	-29
The home of a relative	84	78	- 6
A sports event	80	45	-35
A community or neighborhood center or recreation center	64	49	-15
A live theatre, dance or musical concert performance	61	33	-28
A museum	59	35	-24

Education clearly increases the convenience of certain facilities for the older public. Nonetheless, even among college graduates, public parks, movies, sports events, and live performances are much more convenient for the younger public than for the older public.

Q.27(1)

"CONVENIENT" PLACES FOR YOU TO GO

	College Graduate		
	18-54 %	55-64 %	65 and Over %
The home of a neighbor	99	100	98
A church or synagogue	96	97	97
Places to shop	97	95	95
A doctor of clinic	96	95	92
A restaurant	98	100	96
A library	95	96	91
A public park	92	98	77
A movie	91	85	76
The home of a relative	71	93	78
A sports event	90	81	64
A community or neighborhood center or recreational center	68	74	59
A live theatre, dance or musical concerrt performance	82	75	56
A museum	68	73	62

Observation:

The convenience of a library, movie, or sports event is determined by many factors apart from the physical location of these facilities. As indicated by extensive research conducted by the National Research Center for the Arts, an affiliate of the Harris firm, the accessibility

of cultural events, sporting events, restaurants, etc., is more a function of economic mobility, physical mobility, and education than it is of the location of such places. Substantially lower incomes, health problems, fear of crime, transporation problems, etc., all cause these facilities to be viewed as less convenient by older people than by the young.

Not surprisingly, then, attendance at many of these facilities is in fact much lower among the older public than among the young. The difference in attendance rates is highest for movies (attended by 70% of those under 65 in the last year, compared with only 22% of those 65 and over), sports events, public parks, libraries, live artistic performances, museums and restaurants.

Q.27b

WHETHER HAVE BEEN TO VARIOUS PLACES IN LAST YEAR OR SO

	Total Public		
	18-64 %	65 and Over %	Net Difference
Places to shop	97	90	- 7
The home of a neighbor	92	85	- 7
The home of a relative	92	85	- 7
A restaurant	91	69	-22
A doctor or clinic	85	82	- 3
A church or synagogue	74	77	+ 3
A movie	70	22	-48
A public park	67	31	-36
A sports event	59	19	-40
A library	52	22	-30
A live theatre, dance or musical concert performance	46	17	-29
A museum	41	18	-23
A community or neighborhood center or recreation center	35	17	-18

Even among the college educated, attendance at various places drops off significantly with age. Specifically, the 65 and over college educated are less likely to have attended a restaurant, a movie, a public park, a sports event, a library, a live performance, a museum or a community center than the 18 to 54 college educated.

Q.27b

WHETHER HAVE BEEN TO VARIOUS PLACES IN LAST YEAR OR SO

	College Graduate		
	18-54	55-64	65 and Over
	%	%	%
Places to shop	100	96	94
The home of a neighbor	95	93	90
The home of a relative	9[illegible]	93	88
A restaurant	99	100	88
A doctor or clinic	91	95	85
A church or synagogue	75	85	76
A movie	86	63	46
A public park	80	58	44
A sports event	68	41	31
A library	87	78	63
A live theatre, dance or musical concert performance	75	57	45
A museum	63	63	44
A community or neighborhood center or recreation center	43	24	29

With the younger public earning substantially higher annual incomes than those 65 and over, it would be easy to attribute these vast differences in attendance to income factors alone. The results show, however, that such a conclusion would be grossly inaccurate. For even at the same income level, the young are far more likely to attend cultural or artistic events than the old. A full 81% of people 18 to 54 with incomes of $15,000 and over said that they had attended a movie in the last year, for example, compared with only half that many (39%) people 65 and over with the same incomes.

Q.27b(1)

ATTENDED A MOVIE IN LAST YEAR OR SO (BY INCOME)

	Under $7,000 %	$7,000-$14,999 %	$15,000 and Over %
Total Public	44	66	77
18 to 54	71	74	81
55 to 64	25	39	62
65 and over	18	31	39

Observation:

Income certainly plays a role in determining people's attendance at places such as movies, theatres, restaurants, etc.; after all, twice as many higher income, older people had attended a movie in the last year than those with lower incomes. Yet income alone is not responsible for lower attendance rates among senior citizens. Age in itself appears to have a significant effect on attendance at such facilities. Lower attendance rates among the elderly have to be attributed either to a lack of interest in these places and events by older people or to their

perceived inaccessibility. Fear of crime, a very serious problem for large numbers of older people, may prevent them from evening attendance at many of these places.

Religious Involvement of Public 65 and Over

Attendance at a church or synagogue is slightly higher among the older public than among those under 65. Attendance is lowest among the very young, peaks among those 55 to 79, and falls off somewhat among those 80 and over.

While attendance at a house of worship does not increase steadily with age, the importance that people attach to religion in their own lives does. Seventy-one percent of the public 65 and over feels that religion is very important in their own lives, compared with only 49% of those under 65.

Observation:

While these results may suggest that as people age they attach greater meaning to religion, on the other hand, those who attach the most importance to religion now may have attached that much importance to it throughout their lives. It may well be that society and the role of religion in it have changed, and not that people become more religious as they age.

Q.F6b

IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION IN YOUR LIFE

	Total Public		Total Public						
	18-64 %	65 and Over %	18-24 %	25-39 %	40-54 %	55-64 %	65-69 %	70-79 %	80 and Over %
Very important	49	71	34	45	58	65	69	71	73
Somewhat important	33	21	40	35	29	25	22	21	19
Hardly important at all	17	7	25	20	12	10	8	8	6
Not sure	1	1	1	*	1	*	1	*	2

*Less than 0.5%

Q.27b(9)

ATTENDANCE AT A CHURCH OR SYNAGOGUE IN LAST YEAR OR SO

	Attended in Last Year %	When Attended Last				
		Within Last Week or Two %	A Month Ago %	2-3 Months Ago %	More Than 3 Months Ago %	Not Sure %
Total Public	75	71	13	7	9	*
18 to 64	74	70	14	7	9	*
65 and over	77	79	9	5	7	*
18 to 24	67	60	18	8	14	*
25 to 39	73	72	11	7	10	*
40 to 54	78	70	15	8	7	-
55 to 64	81	79	11	4	6	-
65 to 69	80	79	9	5	6	1
70 to 79	78	79	10	4	7	*
80 and over	68	76	10	6	8	*

* Less than 0.5%

Q.F6a

RELIGION OF PUBLIC

	Public 18-64 %	Public 65 and Over %
Protestant	60	70
Catholic	28	24
Jewish	3	2
Other	2	2
None	7	2
Not sure	*	*

*Less than 0.5%

Present and Potential Interest in Senior Citizens Centers

For 50% of the public 55 and over, there is a senior citizen center or golden age club convenient for them to go to. Senior citizens' centers are apparently least accessible to blacks, to older people in the South, and to people in Countries D, that is, in rural areas.

Q.27a(5)

"CONVENIENT" SENIOR CITIZEN CENTER OR GOLDEN AGE CLUB

	Total %
Total Public 55 and Over	50
55 to 64	49
65 to 69	52
70 to 79	52
80 and over	45
Under $7,000	44
$7,000 to $14,999	55
$15,000 and over	57
White	53
Black	27
Northeast	53
East Central	57
West Central	52
South	38
Pacific	58
Counties A	52
Counties B	50
Counties C	51
Counties D	40

Eighteen percent of the public 65 and over (or about 3.7 million people) and another 8% of those 55 to 64 (another 1.4 million people) say that they have attended a senior citizens' center or golden age club in the past year or so. While such centers were considerably less convenient to blacks, black attendance among those 55 and over is comparable to that of whites. On the whole, senior citizens' centers appeal to the lowest income group (under $7,000) more than to the more affluent. Not only are the least affluent more likely to have attended such a center in the last year; they also attend more frequently than the higher income groups.

Q.27b(5)

ATTENDANCE AT A SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTER OR GOLDEN AGE CLUB IN PAST YEAR OR SO

	Total %
Total Public 55 and Over	13
55-64	8
65 and over	18
65 to 69	19
70 to 79	19
80 and over	16
Men	11
Women	15
Under $7,000	18
$7,000 to $14,999	10
$15,000 and over	8
Some high school or less	14
High school graduate, some college	13
College graduate	14
White	13
Black	17
Northeast	17
East Central	17
West Central	13
South	11
Pacific	10
Counties A	15
Counties B	14
Counties C	12
Counties D	10

WHEN LAST ATTENDED A SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER OR GOLDEN AGE CLUB
(Base: Have attended in last year or so)

	Public 55 and Over			
	Total (13%)	Under $7,000 (18%)	$7,000-$14,999 (10%)	$15,000 and Over (8%)
	%	%	%	%
Within the last day or two	11	12	12	4
Within the last week or two	34	37	29	19
A month ago	22	24	18	20
Two or three months ago	13	10	19	29
Longer ago than that	19	17	22	25
Not sure	1	1	-	2

While 13% of the public 55 and over have been to a senior citizens' center in the past year or so, another 22% of those who have not attended (or 19% of the total public 55 and over) said that they would like to attend. Interest is highest among blacks; an additional 39% of blacks would be interested. Those who would like to attend explained why they haven't done so:

> According to a 65-year-old retired skilled craftsman in York, Pennsylvania: "There is a waiting list to join here."
>
> Said a 65-year-old black foreman in Brooklyn: "I don't know of any that is located around here. It's not too safe in these times to travel."
>
> A 67-year-old retired operative in Chicago, Illinois, explained what is keeping her from attending: "Sometimes I would like to go, but so many people there are so much older than me. And most of them are married and have their own family. What am I supposed to talk about?"

A retired female farm worker in Elk Grove, California said: "It's the same people and the same clique that was in the Native Daughters when I belonged to them 31 years ago, and this one only plays Bingo."

A 75-year-old clerical worker in Alexandria, Virginia, does not attend becasue: "It's not really conveient. It's close, but I can't drive to that area. I would go with someone else though."

A 73-year-old, Duluth, Minnesota, housewife said she would go except: "I don't know of anyone that goes there. If I did, I would like to go there with them."

Said a 74-year-old housewife in Louisville, Kentucky: "Transportation would be a problem. I don't go out at night alone, and cabs start at $1 now. I hate to go alone."

A 78-year-old retired foreman in Newton, New Jersey, would like to join: "But I don't know how to get there or go about joining, and I don't want to make a fool of myself."

The only thing keeping a 78-year-old service worker in Van Nuys, California, from going is: "My health -- my doctor has cautioned me about being with a lot of people. Even the other day, when there were twelve people helping us move, it got to be too much."

Q.27d

INTEREST IN ATTENDING A SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTER
OR GOLDEN AGE CLUB
(Base: 87% of public 55 and over who have not been to one in last year)

	Would Like to Attend	Would Not Like to Attend	Not Sure
	%	%	%
Total Public 55 and Over	22	65	13
55 to 64	24	61	15
65 and over	21	68	11
Men	18	71	11
Women	25	60	15
Under $7,000	24	60	16
$7,000 to $14,999	21	69	10
$15,000 and over	20	68	12
Some high school or less	25	61	14
High school graduate, some college	20	67	13
College graduate	6	82	12
White	21	68	11
Black	39	38	23

All in all, those 19% of people 55 and over who would like to attend but have not done so (that is, about 7 million people) give the following reasons why: no time, too busy (33%), no facilities here, don't know where there are any (21%), transportation problems (13%), and poor health (12%). While the more affluent are much more likely than the less affluent to give "no time" as their reason, the less affluent tend to mention more frequently that there are no facilities or transportation problems.

Q.27e

WHAT'S KEEPING YOU FROM ATTENDING A SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER OR GOLDEN AGE CLUB
(Base: 19% of public 55 and over who would like to attend but have not)

	Total Public 55 and Over	Public		Public 55 and Over		
		55-64	65 and Over	Under $7,000	$7,000-$14,999	$15,000 and Over
	%	%	%	%	%	%
No time, too busy	33	42	23	23	41	46
Too busy with family	10	16	3	10	15	1
Too busy with my work	9	11	6	5	15	7
Too busy with activities, hobbies (e.g., home, gardening, church)	9	10	7	6	4	26
I don't have time; too busy	9	10	8	5	15	13
No facilities here; don't know where there are any	21	14	29	27	19	9
Transportation problems	13	7	20	19	10	1
Lack of transportation; don't drive; someone would have to take me	11	5	17	16	9	1
Too far to go; gas too high	3	2	3	4	*	-
Afraid to go out at night; crime	1	-	2	2	1	-
Poor health; I can't get around	12	9	16	14	10	15
Not interested	8	9	7	12	4	7
It just doesn't appeal to me; just not interested; am happy, satisfied with my life	5	7	3	8	1	7
It's boring, monotonous	1	1	-	2	*	-
Am not alone, lonely; have spouse friends to take to, do things with	1	-	2	2	*	-
Don't care for group activities; like to keep to myself	1	1	1	1	*	1
Don't like activities offered	1	1	1	1	*	1
I'm too young; that's just for old people	8	13	2	5	11	11
Have no one to go with; don't want to go alone; shy	3	1	5	3	2	1
Just never got around to it	10	10	11	7	8	29
All other answers	4	4	4	5	3	3
Don't know	1	1	1	1	*	-

*Less than 0.5%.

A 57% majority of the public 55 and over (that is 65% of the 87% who have not attended) have not attended a senior citizens center or golden age club in the past year and have no interest in attending. By and large, they feel that they are just not interested in attending or that they are too busy to attend.

> According to a 57-year-old clerical worker in Brooklyn, New York, with a household income of more then $25,000: "The people are usually much older than me, and I have nothing in common with them. I also have no extra time, and I have plenty of friends now."
>
> A 72-year-old retired clerical worker in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, explained: "When I've been around a lot of older people, I find them morbid. They complain too much. I like to be with different ages."
>
> An 84-year-old retired manager in Philadelphia is not interested in attending because: "I find reading and studying books more important for me."
>
> In the words of a 71-year-old housewife in Chicago, Illinois: "I have enough with housecleaning and baby sitting for people, so that I don't have time for any of them. I don't like to be with crowds of people."
>
> An 83-year-old woman in Galion, Ohio, has her own reasons: "They play cards and do things I don't approve of."
>
> A 65-year-old female clerical worker in Kokomo, Indiana, with a household income of about $20,000 explained: "I have my own interests and friends. Well, there's my bridge club, my volunteer work, blood bank, Red Cross, mental health, and my ceramics classes. I just don't have the time. I read as much as I can to keep up on current events. Also I watch a little TV to keep myself informed and amused."
>
> Said an 86-year-old manager in Duluth, Minnesota: "I'm too young yet. I'm really too busy. I run my store. I go to the lake, usually every night. I just have too many things to do to keep me busy."

According to a 77-year-old painter in Cranston, Rhode Island: "It's a gossiping joint. I don't like groups. I like to associate with a few good friends."

A 69-year-old retired foreman in Vincennes, Indiana, said: "I'm a stick-in-the-mud. It doesn't appeal to me. I don't know, but I'm the world's worst game player. I'm not lonely, and I don't need some place to go."

A 75-year-old retired manager in Downers Grove, Illinois, gave his reasons: "I've got too many other interests. I don't want to go talk about the 'good old days' and diseases. I'm not interested in listening to the distresses of others."

A 90-year-old housewife in Jersey City, New Jersey, explained: "I would feel out of place, because I have young ways and young ideas. I like rock and roll."

A 75-year-old service worker in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, said: "I'm working, and I can't see making a 'jackass' of myself as those other men do, dancing around, then suffering from a heart attack. They can't walk because their legs ache them, but they find a way to get there and take part in those shows they put on."

In the words of a 70-year-old retired manager in Durham, North Carolina: "I don't feel the need for that right now. A lot of people who are alone might need that contact, but I have my wife and neighbors to communicate with."

Observation:

While a majority of people 55 and over (and particularly the more affluent and better educated) have no need in their lives for senior citizens' centers or golden age clubs, 13% of those surveyed do attend and an additional 19% would like to. The demand for senior citizens' centers is greatest among blacks: two in five blacks 55 and over do not currently attend such a center but would like to. While many of those who would like to attend (and particularly those 55 to 64) say that they just don't have the time, substantial numbers (and particularly those 65 and over and the least affluent) complain that there are no facilities near them or no transportation to get there.

Q.27f

WHY NOT INTERESTED IN ATTENDING A SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER OR GOLDEN AGE CLUB

(Base: 57% of public 55 and over who would not like to attend)

	Total Public 55 and Over	Public	
		55-64	65 and Over
	%	%	%
Not interested	42	38	47
It just doesn't appeal to me; just not interested; am happy; satisfied with my life	23	23	23
Am not alone, lonely; have spouse, friends to talk to, do things with	7	5	8
Don't care for group activities; like to keep to myself	6	3	8
Don't like the activities offered	4	3	4
It's too depressing	4	3	4
It's boring, monotonous	2	2	2
I'd rather stay home	3	2	4
No time, too busy	36	36	37
Too busy with activities, hobbies (e.g., home, gardening, church)	18	15	20
Don't have the time, too busy	11	14	9
Too busy with family	6	3	9
Too busy with my work	4	4	4
It's only for people who have nothing else to do with their time	2	3	2
I'm too young; that's just for old people	17	28	8
Poor health; I can't get around	12	7	17
Transportation problems	5	1	7
Lack of transportation; don't drive, someone would have to take me	3	*	5
Too far to go; gas too high	1	*	1
Afraid to go out at night, crime	1	1	1
No facilities here; don't know where to go	4	5	3
I'm too old	3	1	4
Have no one to go with; don't want to go alone; shy	1	1	*
Just never got around to it	1	1	1
All other answers	4	4	4
Don't know	1	1	1

*Less than 0.5%.

SECTION VII:

THE MEDIA'S PORTRAYAL OF PEOPLE OVER 65

Earlier sections of this report established beyond a doubt that the image of older people held by the public at large is a distorted one tending to be negative and possibly damaging. The media, with coverage of the elderly poor, the elderly sick, the elderly institutionalized and the elderly unemployed or retired, may be protecting and reinforcing the distorted stereotypes of the elderly and myths of old age.

The Media's Portrayal of Older People

On the whole, the public is not critical of the media for the way they project older people. Majorities of media readers, watchers, and listeners feel that newspapers, magazines, books, television and radio usually "give a fair picture of what older people are like," or even "make older people look better than they really are." One in five television watchers, however, feel that television programs "make older people look worse than they really are." Q.28c

WHETHER THE MEDIA USUALLY GIVE A FAIR PICTURE OF WHAT OTHER PEOPLE ARE LIKE

	Give a Fair Picture	Make Older People Look Better than They Really Are	Make Older People Look Worse than They Really Are	Not Sure
	%	%	%	%
Newspapers (Base: 92% who read them)	68	6	11	15
Magazines (Base: 82% who read them)	66	9	9	16
Books (Base: 73% who read them)	62	7	8	23
Television programs (Base: 93% who watch them)	56	16	16	12
Television commercials (Base: 93% who watch television)	48	20	19	13
Radio programs (Base: 91% who listen to it)	51	8	11	30

Heavy television watchers (those who watched four hours or more the previous day) are slightly less likely to criticize television for negative portrayals of older people than are light watchers (those who watched one hour or less).

Q.28c, 28a,b

WHETHER TELEVISION USUALLY GIVES A FAIR PICTURE OF WHAT OLDER PEOPLE ARE LIKE

	Heavy Television Viewers %	Moderate Television Viewers %	Light Television Viewers %
Television Programs			
Give a fair picture of what older people are like	57	57	55
Make older people look better than they really are	18	17	15
Make older people look worse than they really are	12	15	19
Not sure	13	11	11
Television Commercials			
Give a fair picture of what older people are like	50	50	45
Make older people look better than they really are	19	18	22
Make older people look worse than they really are	17	18	20
Not sure	13	13	13

To probe more deeply into the public's attitudes toward television's portrayal of older people, television watchers were asked to agree or disagree with a series of statements describing the way television usually shows people over 65.

Majorities of television watchers agreed with positive statements about the way television usually shows older people. By 79 to 14%, for example, they agreed that, "On the whole, television treats older people with respect." By 74 to 17%, they agreed that "Television usually makes older people look like they are an important part of their family." By 72 to 19%, they agreed that "Television usually makes older people look wise and full of good advice." By 68 to 22%, they agreed that "Television usually makes older people look successful at what they do."

Similarly, majorities of television watchers (although somewhat slimmer ones) rejected negative statements describing how television portrays older people. By 73 to 19%, they disagreed that "Television usually makes older people look untidy and not very pleasant to look at." By 68 to 23%, they disagreed that "Television usually makes older people look useless and in everyone's way." By 67 to 27%, they rejected the notion that "Television usually makes older people look sick and helpless." By a much narrower 55 to 36%, they did not feel that "Television usually makes older people look pushy and meddling into their family's business." By the same margin (55 to 37%), they did not feel that "Television usually makes older people look old fashioned and narrow minded."

By and large, younger and older television watchers agree on how television portrays older people, although the younger public is somewhat more critical of television's role than those 65 and older. Two out of five people under 64 (39%), for example, agreed that "Television usually makes older people

look old fashioned and narrow minded," compared with one in four older people (25%) who felt that way. Moreover, a higher proportion of the college educated (49%) agreed that "Television makes older people look old fashioned and narrow minded," than did those with only some high school education or less (28% of them agreed). The larger proportions of college educated among the young explains, in part, this pattern.

While as many as two in five television watchers are critical of the way television portrays older people, most do not share these feelings. Three in four television watchers do, however, agree (by 76 to 17%) that "On the whole, television programs show young people, not older people."

Observation:

The public is not, on the whole, critical of the way the media portray older people. This may mean simply that the media project and maintain the stereotypes the public already holds.

Majorities of television watchers do feel, however, that television shows young people, not older people.

Q.28d

STATEMENTS ABOUT THE WAY TELEVISION USUALLY SHOWS PEOPLE OVER 65
(Base: 93% of total public who watch television)

	Agree Strongly %	Agree Somewhat %	Disagree Somewhat %	Disagree Strongly %	Not Sure %	Total Agree %	Total Disagree %
Positive Statements							
On the whole, television treats older people with respect	29	50	10	4	7	79	14
Television usually makes older people look like they are an important part of their family	26	48	13	4	9	74	17
Television usually makes older people look wise and full of good advice	23	49	14	3	9	72	19
Television usually makes older people look successful at what they do	17	51	19	3	10	68	22
Negative Statements							
On the whole television programs show young people, not older people	39	37	13	4	7	76	17
Television usually makes older people look old fashioned and narrow-minded	12	25	36	19	8	37	55
Television usually makes older people look pushy and meddling into their family's business	8	28	38	17	9	36	55
Television usually makes older people look sick and helpless	8	19	43	24	6	27	67
Television usually makes older people look useless and in everyone's way	5	18	39	29	9	23	68
Television usually makes older people look untidy and not very pleasant to look at	4	15	40	33	8	19	73

Q.28d(1)

STATEMENTS ABOUT THE WAY TELEVISION PROGRAMS AND COMMERCIALS SHOW PEOPLE OVER 65
(Base: Watch television)
Agrees Only

	Total Public				
	18-64 %	65 and Over %	Some High School or Less %	High School Grad/ Some College %	College Grad %
Positive Statements					
On the whole, television treats older people with respect	77	81	84	78	70
Television usually makes older people look like they are an important part of their family	73	74	74	76	61
Television usually makes older people look wise and full of good advice	72	69	72	73	67
Television usually makes older people look successful at what they do	68	66	71	67	59
Negative Statements					
On the whole, television programs show young people, not older people	76	71	72	76	81
Television usually makes older people look old-fashioned and narrow-minded	39	25	28	39	49
Television usually makes older people look pushy and meddling into their family's business	37	24	32	39	29
Television usually makes older people look sick and helpless	29	21	23	31	28
Television usually makes older people look useless and in everyone's way	24	16	21	24	24
Television usually makes older people look untidy and not very pleasant to look at	19	18	21	17	19

Q.28d(2)

STATEMENTS ABOUT THE WAY TELEVISION PROGRAMS AND COMMERCIALS SHOW PEOPLE OVER 65
(Base: Watch television)
Agrees Only

	Total Public		
	Heavy Television Viewers	Moderate Television Viewers	Light Television Viewers
	%	%	%
Positive Statements			
On the whole, television treats older people with respect	78	81	76
Television usually makes older people look like they are an important part of their family	78	73	72
Television usually makes older people look wise and full of good advice	72	75	69
Television usually makes older people look successful at what they do	70	71	63
Negative Statements			
On the whole, television programs show young people, not older people	75	75	75
Television usually makes older people look old-fashioned and narrow minded	32	35	40
Television usually makes older people look pushy and meddling into their family's business	35	33	39
Television usually makes older people look sick and helpless	28	27	28
Television usually makes older people look useless and in everyone's way	23	22	23
Television usually makes older people look untidy and not very pleasant to look at	20	17	20

While television is thought to show mostly young people, a slim majority (51%) of television watchers say they do sometimes see older people in television programs or commercials that they particularly look up to or admire. Blacks, people in big cities, and those in the Northeast are much less likely to admire older people they see on television than are other television watchers.

Topping the list of older people looked up to or admired are Grandma and Grandpa Walton (21%), followed by Bob Hope (9%), Jack Benny (8%), Robert Young (8%), Buddy Ebsen-Barnaby Jones (6%), and Red Foxx (6%). While those under 65 are more likely to look up to the Waltons and to Robert Young than those 65 and over, the latter are more likely than the former to look up to Lawrence Welk. Not only were blacks less likely to find television personalities to look up to; moreover, those that do looked up to different people than did whites. Highest on blacks' list were Red Foxx (20%), followed by the Waltons (11%), and Bea Arthur as Maude (6%).

Q.28c

WHETHER EVER SEE ANY OLDER PEOPLE IN TELEVISION PROGRAMS OR COMMERCIALS THAT YOU PARTICULARLY LOOK UP TO OR ADMIRE
(Base: Watch television)

	See Such Older People in Television %	Don't See Such Older People %	Not Sure %
Total Public	51	37	12
18-64	51	38	11
65 and over	52	32	16
White	54	35	11
Black	41	43	16
Heavy television viewers	55	35	10
Moderate television viewers	52	36	12
Light television viewers	49	39	12
Counties A	46	41	13
Counties B	55	34	11
Counties C	52	38	10
Counties D	56	31	13
Northeast	46	42	12
East Central	57	36	7
West Central	55	36	9
South	50	35	15
Pacific	54	32	14

Q.28f

OLDER PEOPLE IN TELEVISION PROGRAMS OR COMMERCIALS LOOKED UP TO OR ADMIRED

(Base: 51% of television watchers who see such older people in television)

	Total Public				
	Total	18-64	65 and Over	White	Black
	%	%	%	%	%
The Waltons - Grandma, Grandpa	21	22	14	21	11
Bob Hope	9	9	10	10	3
Jack Benny	8	7	10	8	3
Robert Young	8	9	4	8	*
Buddy Ebsen - Barnaby Jones	6	6	4	6	4
Red Foxx	6	6	6	5	20
John Wayne	5	6	3	6	1
Lawrence Welk	4	3	10	5	3
Charlie Weaver	4	4	4	4	4
Walter Brennan	4	4	2	4	1
Walter Cronkite	4	4	3	4	*
James Stewart	4	5	2	4	2
Lucille Ball	3	3	3	4	
Bing Crosby	3	3	4	3	*
Lorne Green	2	2	4	2	3
Grandpa Hughes (As The World Turns)	2	2	2	2	2
Snoop Sisters - Helen Hayes, Mildred Natwick	2	2	3	2	*
Euell Gibbons	2	2	1	2	*
Bea Arthur - Maude	1	1	1	1	6
Shirley Booth	1	1	1	1	*
George Burns	1	1	1	1	-
Raymond Burr	1	1	1	1	*
Jimmy Durante	1	1	1	1	1
Art Linkletter	1	1	1	1	-
Jeanette Nolan - Dirty Sally	1	*	2	1	2
Barbara Stanwyck	1	1	1	1	*
Archie Bunker - Carroll O'Connor	1	1	1	1	*
Apples Way - Grandpa	1	1	2	1	-
Irene Ryan	1	1	1	1	2
Other television, film personalities	25	25	25	24	31
Other commercial personalities	5	6	4	5	7
Other newscasters	3	3	3	4	*
Other politicians, statesmen	2	2	3	2	*
All other answers	4	4	4	4	7
Don't know	11	11	16	11	12

*Less than 0.5%.

Present and Potential Role of the Media in Improving the Image of Older People

The results of this survey indicate that television, the medium which reaches the broadest audience, has so far had no discernible positive or negative effect on the way that the public views older people. In evaluating most people over 65 on the image criteria discussed in Section II of this report, the responses of heavy, moderate, light and non-television viewers are comparable:

Q.4b,28a,b

EFFECT OF TELEVISION VIEWING ON IMAGE
OF MOST PEOPLE OVER 65

	Heavy Television Viewers %	Moderate Television Viewers %	Light Television Viewers %	Non-Viewers %
Very friendly and warm	71	75	73	75
Very wise from experience	63	67	62	66
Very physically active	42	41	42	41
Very good at getting things done	37	31	38	37
Very bright and alert	28	28	29	39
Very open-minded and adaptable	24	20	20	25
Very sexually active	5	5	5	8

The median scores received by the four viewer groups on the image scale do not vary significantly.

Q.4

MEDIAN SCORE BASED ON IMAGE OF "MOST PEOPLE OVER 65" SCALE

	Median Score
Total Public	9.9
Heavy television viewer	9.8
Moderate television viewer	10.0
Light television viewer	9.9
Non-viewer	10.1

Observation:

The impact of television on the public view of older people has, therefore, been in no way negative. Nor has it thus far played any positive role, however, in improving the image of older people.

As concluded earlier, the overall image of older people does not vary so much by key demographic factors, such as income, education, race, or even age, as it does vary from the testimony of older people. Any attempt by media personnel to overcome negative stereotypes of older people may recognize first the total audience, both the affluent and the poor, the well educated and the less well educated, whites and blacks, and the young and the old themselves. With every income group, educational group, whites and blacks having spent more time watching television on the previous day than reading newspapers, magazines and books, or listening to radio, television appears to be the medium that will reach the largest proportion of each group.

In terms of age, the youngest adults revealed the least positive attitudes toward older people. Unlike any other age group, the 18 to 24 year olds reported spending as much time listening to radio during the previous day as they did watching television.

Observation:

With the public at large viewing most older people as passive, sedentary types who have lost the open-mindedness, mental alertness, and efficiency of the young beset with economic problems, poor health and loneliness, it is unlikely that they would criticize the media for portraying older people in the same light. The extent to which the media do in fact portray positive or negative images of older people can be assessed only through scientific content analysis of the media by relatively scientists and not through opinion research.

If media personnel are aware and concerned about the public attitudes toward old age and the unrepresentative stereotypes of old people that are believed, they probably would help to correct these images. Because the public's exposure to older persons is potentially more frequent and diversified on television than in real life, it is likely that television could ameliorate misunderstandings faster than the population itself.

Q.28a

PUBLIC MEDIA HABITS

	Total Public							
	Public 18-64 %	Public 65 and Over %	Under $7000 %	$7000-14,999 %	$15,000 and Over %	Some High School or Less %	High School Grad/ Some College %	College Grad %
Ever spend time watching television	93	95	92	93	94	93	94	91
Ever spend time reading newspapers	93	87	85	92	96	85	94	99
Ever spend time listening to radio	93	83	88	93	92	88	92	93
Ever spend time reading magazines	85	67	69	84	90	66	89	92
Ever spend time reading books	76	57	59	74	83	54	80	90

Q.28a(1)

MEDIA HABITS OF PUBLIC 65 AND OVER

	Public 65 and Over											
	Total %	Public 65-69 %	Public 70-79 %	Public 80 and Over %	Under $3000 %	$3000-$6,999 %	$7000-14,999 %	$15,000 and Over %	Some High School or Less %	High School Grad/ Some College %	College Grad %
Ever spend time watching television	95	96	95	90	92	95	96	97	93	97	97
Ever spend time reading newspapers	87	91	86	79	76	89	95	97	82	95	97
Ever spend time listening to radio	83	86	82	80	82	84	84	83	81	87	85
Ever spend time reading magazines	67	70	67	58	49	68	81	80	55	85	92
Ever spend time reading books	57	62	57	47	46	56	67	80	46	72	92

Q.28b

MEDIAN NUMBER OF HOURS SPENT YESTERDAY WITH MEDIA

	Total Public								
	Total	Under $7,000	$7,000-$14,999	$15,000 and Over	Some High School or Less	High School Grad/ Some College	College Grad	White	Black
Watching television	1.8	2.1	1.8	1.5	2.1	1.8	1.2	1.8	2.1
Listening to radio	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.3
Reading newspapers	.9	.8	.9	1.0	.9	.9	1.0	.9	.8
Reading magazines	.4	.4	.4	.4	.3	.4	.5	.4	.4
Reading books	.4	.3	.4	.4	.3	.4	.5	.4	.4

	Total Public							
	Total	18-24	25-39	40-54	55-64	65-69	70-79	80 and Over
Watching television	1.8	1.8	1.6	1.8	1.8	2.4	2.2	2.0
Listening to radio	1.2	1.8	1.3	1.1	1.0	1.0	.9	.9
Reading newspapers	.9	.8	.9	1.0	1.0	1.0	.9	.9
Reading books	.4	.4	.4	.4	.3	.3	.3	.3
Reading magazines	.4	.4	.4	.4	.4	.4	.4	.4

Q.28b

TIME SPENT YESTERDAY WITH MEDIA

	None %	1 Hour %	2 Hours %	3 Hours %	4 Hours %	5 Hours %	More than 5 Hours %	Not Sure %	Median Number of Hours Spent
Watching Television									
Public 18 to 64	21	23	25	15	7	4	5	*	1.7
Public 65 and over	12	18	26	18	12	6	7	1	2.2
Reading Newspapers									
Public 18 to 64	20	72	6	1	*	*	*	1	.9
Public 65 and over	22	64	10	2	1	*	*	1	.9
Listening to Radio									
Public 18 to 64	21	37	17	8	5	3	8	1	1.3
Public 65 and over	33	34	15	6	3	1	5	3	1.0
Reading Magazines									
Public 18 to 64	61	33	3	1	*	*	*	2	.4
Public 65 and over	67	26	4	1	*	-	*	2	.4
Reading Books									
Public 18 to 64	66	20	7	3	1	1	1	1	.4
Public 65 and over	73	16	6	2	1	*	*	2	.3

SECTION VIII:

THE POLITICS OF OLD AGE

Mandatory Retirement

Sixty-one percent of all working people in this country say that their company or place of work has a pension or other employee benefit plan with a fixed retirement age. This means that 61% of all working people can expect that at a fixed age they will be told to retire from their jobs.

Observation:

Apart from those with required retirement age, other workers can expect to be influenced, when they approach their mid-60's, by subtle pressures to move over and make room for the young. During the current recession, these pressures on older workers are apt to be greater than normal. Yet the pressures of double-digit inflation are likely to make older Americans more resistant to retirement than they normally are.

Q.19f(1)

WHETHER YOUR COMPANY OR PLACE OF WORK HAS A PENSION OR OTHER EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PLAN
(Base: 52% of public employed full time or part time)

	Has Plan %	Has No Plan %	Not Sure %
Total Public	61	36	3
18-64	62	35	3
65 and over	24	73	3
Men	63	34	3
Women	54	42	4
Northeast	60	37	3
East Central	67	30	3
West Central	61	29	10
South	55	44	1
Pacific	62	38	-

Q.19g

WHETHER PENSION OR OTHER EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PLAN
HAS FIXED RETIREMENT AGE

(Base: 52% of public employed full time or part time)

	Total Public		
	Total	18-64	65 and Over
	%	%	%
Has plan with fixed retirement age	36	37	13
Has plan with no fixed retirement age	19	19	9
Has plan but not sure about fixed retirement age	6	6	2
Has no pension or other employee benefit plan	36	35	73
Not sure about pension or employee benefit plan	3	3	3

That discrimination against older workers exists is suggested not only by fixed retirement policies but by the testimony of those people who say they are responsible for hiring and firing people on their job. Eighty-seven percent of the latter agreed that "Most employers discriminate against older people and make it difficult for them to find jobs."

Observation:

Those people most in the know about hiring and firing policies are even more aware of discrimination against older people than is the public at large.

Q.22,19j

AGREE WITH STATEMENTS ABOUT RETIREMENT

	Total Public %	Public 18-64 with Responsibility for Hiring and Firing (18%) %
Nobody should be forced to retire because of age, if he wants to continue working and is still able to do a good job	86	79
Most employers discriminate against older people and make it difficult for them to find jobs	80	87
Most older people retire of their own choice because they are tired of working or have poor health	66	60
Most older people can continue to perform as well on the job as they did when they were younger	58	52
Since many people are ready to retire at 65 years of age and it's hard to make exceptions for those who are not ready, it makes sense to have a fixed retirement age for everyone	49	37
Older people should retire when they can, so as to give younger people more of a chance on the job	49	49

By 86 to 12%, the public agreed that "Nobody should be forced to retire because of age if he wants to continue working and is still able to do a good job." Furthermore, a 58 to 36% majority agreed that "Most older people can continue to perform as well on the job as they did when they were younger."

While largely opposed to putting people out to pasture at a fixed and inflexible age, nearly half of the public recognize some advantages to fixed retirement policies. By 49 to 46%, the public agreed that "Older people should retire when they can, so as to give younger people more of a chance on

the job." Likewise many people are aware of the administrative difficulties involved in making retirement decisions on an employee by employee basis; by 49 to 43%, they agreed that "Since many people are ready to retire at 65 years of age, and it's hard to make exceptions for those who are not ready, it makes sense to have a fixed retirement age for everyone." Only 37% of the hiring and firing decision-makers, however, feel a fixed retirement age for everyone makes sense.

Observation:

The findings suggest that most hiring and firing decision-makers would not be opposed to some kind of individualized method for determining who should be forced to retire and who should not.

Q.22(1)

STATEMENTS ABOUT RETIREMENT

	Total Public						
	Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly	Not Sure	Total Agree	Total Disagree
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Nobody should be forced to retire because of age if he wants to continue working and is still able to do a good job	66	20	7	5	2	86	12
Most employers discriminate against older people and make it difficult for them to find work	49	31	10	3	7	80	13
Most older people retire of their own choice because they are tired of working or have poor health	32	34	17	10	7	66	27
Since many people are ready to retire at 65 years of age and it's hard to make exceptions for those who are not ready, it makes sense to have a fixed retirement age for everyone	21	28	21	22	8	49	43
Older people should retire when they can, so as to give younger people more of a chance on the job	21	28	28	18	5	49	46
Most older people can continue to perform as well on the job as they did when they were younger	19	39	28	8	6	58	36

Q.22(2)

AGREE ("STRONGLY" OR "SOMEWHAT") WITH STATEMENTS
ABOUT RETIREMENT

	Total Public		
	Total %	18-64 %	65 and Over %
Nobody should be forced to retire because of age, if he wants to continue working and is still able to do a good job.	86	86	86
Most employers discriminate against older people and make it difficult for them to find work.	80	81	75
Most older people retire of their own choice because they are tired of working or have poor health	66	66	70
Most older people can continue to perform as well on the job as they did when they were younger	58	59	63
Since many people are ready to retire at 65 years of age and it's hard to make exceptions for those who are not ready, it makes sense to have a fixed retirement age for everyone	49	48	54
Older people should retire when they can, so as to give younger people more of a chance on the job	49	47	55

That people are ready to retire at 65 years of age is, in itself, however, a faulty assumption. While 48% of retired or unemployed people 65 and over said that they in fact looked forward to stopping work, nearly as many (45%) did not. Among those with incomes of under $3,000, a full 61% said that they did not look forward to stopping work.

Q.20a

ATTITUDES TOWARD RETIREMENT

(Base: 69% of public 65 and over who are "retired" or "unemployed")

	Total	Under $3,000	$3,000-$6,999	$7,000-$14,999	$15,000 and Over	White	Black
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Looked forward to stopping work	48	33	52	59	47	50	42
Did not look forward to stopping work	45	61	43	33	49	45	50
Not sure	6	6	5	8	4	5	8

To be sure, retired and unemployed people 65 and over said they missed the money the job brought in, when they stopped working. As important as the income the job brought in were the people at work. In addition, majorities of those retired or unemployed said they missed the work itself, the feeling of being useful, and things happening around them.

Q.20b

THINGS RETIRED PEOPLE 65 AND OVER MISSED ABOUT THEIR JOBS
(Base: 69% of public 65 and over who are "retired" or "unemployed")

	Missed	Did Not Miss	Not Sure	One Thing Missed Most
	%	%	%	%
The money it brings in	74	24	2	28
The people at work	73	25	2	28
The work itself	62	36	2	10
The feeling of being useful	59	38	3	11
Things happening around you	57	39	4	5
The respect of others	50	45	5	2
Having a fixed schedule every day	43	54	3	4

While the country appears to be moving toward younger and younger required retirement age, the public is divided on whether or not this is a positive move. While those 18 to 64 agreed by a plurality (47 to 39%) that younger required retirement is a good thing, those 65 and over disagreed by 47 to 33% (with 20% not sure).

ATTITUDES TOWARD YOUNGER REQUIRED RETIREMENT AGE

	Total Public		
	Total	18-64	65 and Over
	%	%	%
Feel younger retirement is a good thing	45	47	33
Feel it's not a good thing	40	39	47
Not sure	15	14	20

Those who favored an earlier retirement age explained their reasons for feeling that way:

According to a 31-year-old black laborer in Cleveland, Ohio: "The way it used to be, a man worked too many years of his life, plus he gives an opportunity for young people to move up."

A 35-year-old clerical worker in Charlottesville, Virginia, also feels that younger retirement is a good thing: "Then older people have the time to do the things they've always wanted to do and didn't have time for."

A 56-year-old clerical worker in Wheaton, Illinois, explained: "With younger retirement, people would be young enough to enjoy their retirement and their health would be good yet."

Said a 69-year-old retired skilled craftsman in Glendale, California, with an income of under $3,000: "Younger retirement gives a person more of a chance to get around and see things he couldn't see when he was working, providing he has enough money."

A 66-year-old retired craftsman in Duluth, Minnesota, explained: "Retirement lets you enjoy life, go fishing, continue the hobbies you don't have time for when you work."

Those opposed to younger retirement age gave their reasons as well:

In the words of a 41-year-old Mexican-American manager in Chula-Vista, California: "Taking a man's productive use is not good. No matter how bright a kid is, he is going to need experience to be completely useful. When a man no longer feels he is useful is when he really deteriorates."

A 62-year-old housewife in Rome, Georgia, said: "After a person retires, his health starts to fail and it seems he starts giving up."

A 46-year-old housewife in Verona, Pennsylvania, had this to say: "This ages a man and he fails faster if he retires early, unless he is wealthy and has various interests."

According to an 82-year-old, part-time professional in Newton, New Jersey: "I think work is good for everyone, if they have their health. You stay much more alert and interesting when you keep busy doing something, whether it's work or volunteer work."

An 80-year-old retired skilled craftsman in Kirkwood, Missouri, felt this way: "I really feel a person should work longer if

they can. It gives them something to do. They feel like they have something to live for."

A 78-year-old Mexican-American woman in Goodyear, Arizona, explained why she is opposed to early retirement: "Well, for one thing, I have seen in my family when people retire too early they tend to become useless and unwanted, unproductive. An emotional metamorphosis occurs, where people feel life has now passed them by and they are declining."

All in all, those who opted for earlier retirement explained, primarily, that it gives people the chance to enjoy their life and do things before they get too sick or too old, and that it makes more jobs for younger people. (Those under 65 are much more likely than those 65 and over to feel that earlier retirement gives people a chance to enjoy their life.) Those opposed to earlier required retirement felt, primarily, that work makes people feel useful and needed, that retirement brings about illness and old age and people should be able to work as long as they want to. (Those 65 and over felt more strongly than the young that retirement ages people.)

Observation:

That the under 65 are more likely than those 65 and over to think of retirement as a "chance to enjoy life" may suggest a lack of enjoyment opportunities experienced by younger workers.

While a plurality of the young may be in favor of younger retirement for those who want to enjoy the things in life they have never had time for otherwise, the public at large is strongly opposed to an inflexible mandatory retirement system. Those older people who want to continue work into their 60's, 70's and 80's and who are still able to do their jobs (a majority of the public feel most older people are still able) should not be retired against their will. These results represent a strong public mandate for the rollback of mandatory retirement guidelines and practices.

Q.21b

REASONS WHY YOUNGER REQUIRED RETIREMENT AGE IS GOOD OR NOT

	Public	
	18-64 Years (47%)	65 Years and Over (33%)
	%	%
Reasons Why Earlier Retirement Age Is Good		
Gives people chance to enjoy life, do things before they get too sick, old	33	15
Makes, gives more jobs to younger people	12	13
Good that people can retire early, when want to; get tired of working	5	4
Good if there's adequate retirement plan, enough income	4	3
Health reasons; people should retire if in poor health	3	3
People can't, don't work as well when they get older	3	2
Can draw earlier, more social security	2	2
Good if people have other interests, hobbies to keep them busy	3	1
At age 60 you've worked long enough, have done all you can	4	2
Should lower retirement age more	3	1
All other reasons	1	2
Reasons Why Earlier Retirement Age Is Not Good	(39%)	(47%)
Work is good for people; retirement bad	29	31
Work makes people feel useful, needed, happier; gives them something to live for	11	10
Work keeps people busy, active; keeps them from getting bored, idle	8	11
Retirement brings about illness, rapid aging, death; many go downhill	6	6
Retirement pushes older people out, "on the shelf," forgotten	2	1
Work keeps people younger	1	1
Retirement is not good for people	1	2
People should work as long as they want to, are able to	21	22
Many people over 65 are still qualified, mentally, physically active and productive	9	8
Many people over 65 are more qualified; have years of experience	6	7
Income; people need to work for the income	5	6
Health; people should retire only if they have to for health	3	6
All other reasons	1	2
Not Sure If Early Retirement Is Good Or Not, Depends On Persons	2	6
Don't Know	2	4

Government Support of Retired People

Those who choose to retire or who are no longer able to continue their work should have the right to retire, the public feels, and to turn to the government for financial support. While minorities of the public feel that employers, older people themselves and their children should share in the responsibility of providing income for older people when they are no longer working, an overwhelming majority of the public, young and old, feel it is the government's job:

WHO SHOULD PROVIDE INCOME FOR OLDER PEOPLE
WHEN THEY ARE NO LONGER WORKING

	Total Public					
	Total	Under $7000	$7000-$14,999	$15,000 and Over	18-64	65 and Over
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Government through social security	68	70	70	64	67	74
Government (non-specific)	28	28	26	31	30	18
Pension plan, employer	46	34	49	53	47	40
Should provide for themselves	34	25	32	43	33	38
Their children	10	9	10	12	11	8
Other	2	2	2	2	2	1
Not sure	2	4	2	1	2	3

NOTE: Totals come to more than 100% since some people selected more than one source of income for older people.

Further findings underscored the notion that the government, with its powers of taxation, has responsibility for the support of older people. By 81 to 14%, the public agreed that "government should help support older people with the taxes collected from all Americans." Interestingly, those under 65 agree with this statement even more strongly than those 65 and over. Similarly,

employed people agreed to public support of older people in greater numbers than retired themselves.

Q.22,19a

GOVERNMENT SHOULD HELP SUPPORT OLDER PEOPLE
WITH THE TAXES COLLECTED FROM ALL AMERICANS

	Total Public					
	Total	Employed	Retired	Under $7,000	$7,000-$14,999	$15,000 and Over
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree strongly	50	54	48	53	50	48
Agree somewhat	31	29	28	29	31	33
Disagree strongly	9	9	10	7	9	10
Disagree somewhat	5	4	7	3	5	6
Not sure	5	4	7	8	5	3
Total agree	81	83	76	82	81	81
Total disagree	14	13	17	10	14	16

Not only should the government provide income for older, retired people, the public feels, it should provide them with enough income to live comfortably. By 76 to 19%, the public agreed that "No matter how much a person earned during his working years, he should be able to have enough money to live on comfortably when he's older and retired."

In such unanimous agreement to the rights of older people to live comfortably, the public is implying that older people, many of whom live off fixed incomes, should not be victimized by inflation. Not only did they imply favoring support of older people in line with rising prices, they came right

out and said so: "As the cost of living increases," the public agreed by an overwhelming 97 to 2%, "social security payments to retired people should increase also." Comparable numbers of the young and old, and of all income groups, supported cost of living escalators in social security payments.

Observation:

In these results, the public offers its full support not only to recently legislated increases in social security payments but furthermore to the general notion that such payments should continue to escalate in proportion to cost of living increases. The findings refute any notions of a taxpayers' revolt against supporting the aged through government imposed taxes. To the contrary, the public feels that older people have the right not merely to sustain themselves, but to live comfortably.

Q.22,19a

AS THE COST OF LIVING INCREASES,
SOCIAL SECURITY PAYMENTS TO RETIRED PEOPLE SHOULD INCREASE ALSO

	Total Public					
	Total	Employed	Retired	Under $7,000	$7,000-$14,999	$15,000 and Over
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree strongly	85	85	89	85	87	81
Agree somewhat	12	12	9	12	11	14
Disagree somewhat	1	1	1	1	1	2
Disagree strongly	1	1	*	1	1	2
Not sure	1	1	1	1	*	1
Total agree	97	97	98	97	98	95
Total disagree	2	2	1	2	2	4

* Less than 0.5%

Q. 22(3)

STATEMENTS ABOUT GOVERNMENT SUPPORT OF RETIRED PEOPLE

	Total Public		
	Total %	18-64 %	65 and Over %
As the cost of living increases, social security payments to retired people should increase also	97	97	96
Government should help support older people with the taxes collected from all Americans	81	82	76
No matter how much a person earned during his working years, he should be able to have enough money to live on comfortably when he's older and retired	76	76	74

Q.22(4)

STATEMENTS ABOUT GOVERNMENT SUPPORT OF RETIRED PEOPLE

	Total Public						
	Agree Strongly %	Agree Somewhat %	Disagree Somewhat %	Disagree Strongly %	Not Sure %	Total Agree %	Total Disagree %
As the cost of living increases, social security payments to retired people should increase also	85	12	1	1	1	97	2
Government should help support older people with the taxes collected from all Americans	50	31	9	5	5	81	14
No matter how much a person earned during his working years, he should be able to have enough money to live on comfortably when he's older and retired	50	26	12	7	5	76	19

226

How to Refer to People 65 and Over

As groups become politicized, they often have some strong feelings about how they want to hear themselves referred to both by the media and by those who favor or oppose their cause. As blacks became increasingly politicized in the 1960's, for example, strong preference grew to hear themselves referred to as "blacks," rather than "Negroes," or other terms used previously. Similarly, a politicized women's movement became increasingly sensitive to how they were referred to, and supporters of the movement insisted on being called "women," and not "girls" or "ladies." For this reason, the survey measured among the public 65 and over the extent to which they have preferences for how they are referred to, and what their preferences are.

Approximately one in three people 65 and over are indifferent to which names are used to refer to them. The rest, however, expressed some strong likes and dislikes. Majorities of those 65 and over said that they liked three names: "a mature American" (liked by 55%), "a retired person" (liked by 53%), and "a senior citizen" (liked by 50%). When asked to identify the one name they preferred to hear themselves referred to, "senior citizen" came out on top, followed by "mature American," and "a retired person."

The least popular names on the list were "an old man or old woman" (disliked by 67%), "an aged person" (disliked by 45%), and "a golden ager" (disliked by 36%).

Observation:

Organizations that either support older people's cause or cater to their needs may find these preferences of older people useful and refer to them accordingly. It should be pointed out, however, that a creative exploratory of hybrids was not the intent of the survey. Such alternatives as "senior American" or "mature citizen" might prove appealing.

Q.10a WAYS IN WHICH PUBLIC 65 AND OVER LIKE TO BE REFERRED TO

	Public 65 and Over				
	Like %	Don't Like %	It Doesn't Matter (Volunteered) %	Not Sure %	One Name Preferred %
A senior citizen	50	15	34	1	33
A retired person	53	12	34	1	12
A mature American	55	13	30	2	13
An elderly person	38	30	31	1	6
A middle-aged person	37	25	34	4	3
An older American	37	28	33	2	3
A golden ager	27	36	33	4	3
An old timer	26	45	27	2	4
An aged person	19	50	30	1	1
An old man/old woman	8	67	24	1	1
None of these					3
Doesn't matter (vol.)					12
Not sure					2

Preference here varied only slightly by income. The less affluent were more likely than the more affluent to prefer the name "senior citizen," while the latter were more likely than the former to opt for "mature American" and "retired person." Furthermore, the poorest among the older public were more indifferent to the entire matter than the more affluent.

Q.19b(1)

ONE NAME PREFER TO BE REFERRED TO AS (BY INCOME)

	Public 65 and Over			
	Under $3,000 %	$3,000-$6,999 %	$7,000-$14,999 %	$15,000 and Over %
A senior citizen	35	35	35	23
A mature American	9	12	17	19
An elderly person	7	5	4	9
A retired person	8	11	18	18
A golden ager	3	4	3	-
An old timer	5	5	2	3
A middle aged person	2	3	3	8
An Older American	3	3	3	2
An aged person	2	*	*	-
An old man/old woman	1	1	1	-
Any other name	5	4	3	6
More of these	2	3	2	6
Doesn't matter (vol.)	16	12	8	6
Not sure	2	2	1	-

*Less than 0.5%.

Support for Older People: A Political Force

Among both the young and the old, there is potential support for a movement to improve the conditions and social status of people over 65. Those under 65 are most conscious of the need for such a movement: 81% of them feel people need to join together to work toward improving the conditions and social status of people over 65, compared with 70% of those 65 and over.

Not only does the public believe there is a need to improve the conditions and social status of people over 65, moreover, substantial numbers of people would be interested in joining a group organized toward that end. Thirty-seven percent of the public 18 to 64 (or over 44.5 million people) and 32% of those 65 and over (6.7 million people) said that they would "certainly" or "probably" join and take part in such a group. Fourteen percent of the younger group (16.9 million) and 16% of the older (3.4 million) would "certainly" take part in such a group.

Q.30a

WHETHER FEEL THERE IS A REAL NEED FOR PEOPLE TO JOIN TOGETHER TO WORK TOWARD IMPROVING THE CONDITIONS AND SOCIAL STATUS OF PEOPLE OVER 65 IN THIS COUNTRY

	Total Public		
	Total %	18-64 %	65 and Over %
There is a real need for people to join together to work toward improving the conditions and social status of people over 65	79	81	70
This is not necessary	12	11	17
Not sure	9	8	13

Q.30b

INTEREST IN JOINING A GROUP ORGANIZED TO WORK TOWARD IMPROVING THE CONDITIONS AND SOCIAL STATUS OF PEOPLE OVER 65

	Total Public			Public 65 and Over		
	Total %	18-64 %	65 and Over %	65-69 %	70-79 %	80 and Over %
I would certainly join and take an active part in it	15	14	16	20	15	10
I would probably join and taken an active part in it	22	23	16	20	15	11
I would probably not join, but would support its goals	54	55	51	45	52	56
I would certainly not join and would be opposed to its activities	1	1	3	3	3	5
Not sure	8	7	14	12	15	18

Concluding Observation

The public has a heavy conscience indeed about the plight of the elderly in this country, and would be willing to rally around efforts to improve older people's status and conditions. What the public must be led to see, however, is that offering the elderly free handouts and paying lip service to respect for their wisdom will not substantially improve the status or the conditions of people over 65. Society as a whole must learn that the problems of older people reflect the problems of this nation and that they are as ready, willing and able to work toward the solution of these problems as the rest of the population. The young must be taught to see that there is a continuity to life, and that, apart from the inevitable aging of the body, people in their later years are not that much different from the way they were in their own youth and the way the young are now themselves. The old themselves must learn to see that they are not really exceptions, but that their peers as a group share their energies, interests, capabilities and concerns. In short, both young and old can and need to identify with other older Americans as people with essentially the same strengths and weaknesses, hopes and fears. Before efforts to "improve the conditions and status of older people" can be really effective, the public must first learn more about who these older people are, and the role they as individuals

want to play in improving the quality of life in this country, both for themselves and for the nation as a whole. All who inform or influence others, particularly the very young, have an important role to play in improving public understanding. The heaviest responsibility rests on those who wield the greatest influence or who provide most of the information. This misunderstanding does not hurt some downtrodden minority - as repugnant as that might be. It eventually hurts everyone.

APPENDIX: I

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON SAMPLES

The introduction of this report included a description of the demographic characteristics of the public, including the total public, the public 18 to 64 and the public 65 and over. For purposes of analysis, however, the sample has been broken down into finer subgroups within three age groups: (1) the public 18 to 54, (2) the public 55 to 64, and (3) the public 65 and over. Racial breaks were achieved within two age groups only: (1) 18 to 64, and (2) 65 and over, because the sample 55 to 64 was too small to allow breaks between whites and blacks. The following table presents the number of interviews completed and the weighted percentage of the total sample that each analytic subgroup represents:

	Public 18-54		Public 55-64		Public 65 and Over	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total	971	71	486	14	2797	15
Men	365	34	208	7	1092	6
Women	606	37	278	7	1705	9
Under $3,000					906	4
$3,000 to $6,999					1124	6
Under $7,000	192	12	176	5	2030	10
$7,000 to $14,999	429	31	183	5	485	3
$15,000 and over	328	26	111	3	125	1
Some high school or less	214	16	236	7	1891	9
High school graduate, some college	591	43	203	6	716	4
College graduate	159	12	44	1	166	1

	Public 18-64		Public 65 and Over	
	#	%	#	%
White	1222	71	2244	13
Black	140	9	479	1
Blacks 65 and Over				
Under $2,000			172	*
$2,000 to $3,999			187	*
$4,000 and over			99	*
Under $3,000 and 65 and over				
White			592	3
Black			288	1
$3,000 to $6,999 65 and over				
White			947	6
Black			144	*

*Less than 0.5%

Q.F2a,F2e

PERSONAL 1973 INCOME** FOR PUBLIC 65 AND OVER

	Public 65 and Over	Public			White	Black
		65-69	70-79	80 and Over		
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Under $1,000	3	2	3	4	2	7
$1,000-$1,999	10	8	10	15	8	26
$2,000-$2,999	14	10	16	16	13	24
$3,000-$3,999	15	13	14	22	15	15
$4,000-$4,999	14	15	14	12	14	9
$5,000-$6,999	14	15	15	12	15	8
$7,000-$9,999	14	17	13	7	15	4
$10,000-$14,999	9	12	8	3	9	3
$15,000-$19,999	3	3	3	2	3	-
$20,000-$24,999	1	2	1	*	1	*
$25,000 and over	1	2	1	1	1	*
Not sure/refused	24	24	24	26	24	22
Median income (in thousands)	$4.5	$5.1	$4.4	$3.5	$4.6	$2.6

*Less than 0.5%.

** Income for people 65 and over who are heads of household and their spouses includes total household income. Income for people 65 and over who are not heads, nor spouses of heads, includes only the income that is available to them and their spouses personally to spend, and not income that belongs to other members of the household.

Q.F2c,2d

CURRENT SOURCES OF INCOME FOR PUBLIC 65 AND OVER

	Current Source %	Source Supplying Largest Part of Income %
Government Sources		
Social security benefits	89	58
Supplemental security income (old age assistance)	7	3
Veteran's assistance	5	1
Other government pension	7	3
Current Earnings From Job		
Earnings from own current job	13	5
Earnings from spouse's job	7	4
Pensions		
Teacher's retirement	4	2
Railroad retirement	4	3
Company pension	21	5
Savings and Investments		
Savings	36	3
Investments (stocks, bonds, real estate)	19	6
Insurance	6	1
Rent From Renters or Boarders	8	2
Inheritance	3	11
Money From Children or Other Relatives	4	1
Other	3	1
Not sure	1	2

QF2b

WHETHER PUBLIC 65 AND OVER PAY FOR OWN CLOTHES, FOOD AND RENT

	Public 65 and Over	Under $3,000	$3,000-$6,999	$7,000-$14,999	$15,000 and Over
	%	%	%	%	%
Clothes					
Pay for all of it	93	88	94	98	95
Pay for some of it	6	10	5	2	3
Pay for none of it	1	2	1	*	2
Not sure	-	-	-	-	-
Food					
Pay for all of it	91	84	92	95	92
Pay for some of it	7	11	6	4	7
Pay for none of it	2	4	2	1	1
Not sure	*	1	-	-	-
Rent					
Pay for all of it	39	37	38	42	31
Pay for some of it	4	3	5	2	*
Pay for none of it	5	4	6	1	6
No rent/own house	52	55	51	54	62
Not sure	*	1	*	1	1

*Less than 0.5%.

Q.F4

HIGHEST GRADE OF SCHOOL COMPLETED

	Public 65 and Over %	White %	Black %
No formal schooling (o years)	3	2	12
First through seventh grade (1-7 years of school completed)	22	19	50
8th grade (8 years of school completed	21	21	17
High school graduate (12 years of school completed)	16	18	5
Post-high school vocational training	4	4	1
Some college (-13 years of college completed)	8	9	2
Two year college graduate (completed 2 years community college, etc.)	2	2	*
Four year college graduate (completed 4 years of college)	4	4	2
Post graduate (4 year college graduate and completed at least 1 year of graduate school	3	3	1

Q.F5

LABOR UNION MEMBERSHIP OF PUBLIC 65 AND OVER

	Public 65 and Over %
Current Membership	
Self is currently member	4
Other member of household is currently member	4
Former Membership	
Self was formerly member	12
Other member of household was formerly member	5
No Union Member (current or former) in Household	76
Not sure	1

Q.F1a

MARITAL STATUS OF PUBLIC 65 AND OVER

	Total Public 65 and Over %	Men %	Women %
Single	4	4	5
Married	55	78	39
Divorced	2	2	2
Separated	1	1	1
Widowed	38	15	53

APPENDIX: II

DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE DESIGN

The study design called for a national cross section of approximately 1,500 adults 18 years of age and over, an oversample of approximately 2,400 persons 65 years of age and older, and an oversample of approximately 360 persons 55 to 64 years of age. In addition, there was included an oversample of 200 blacks 65 and over.

To obtain a national cross section of the American people, a carefully stratified national sample of the civilian population of the United States was drawn. The sample was based on the latest census information available for the U.S. population.

The precise technique by which the random sample of the population was drawn is known as multi-stage random cluster sampling, a method which assures every household a statistically equal chance of being drawn into a given survey. The national sample is first stratified in two dimensions: by geographic region (East, Midwest, South and West), and by size of place within a region (city, suburb, town and rural area). This stratification insures that the ultimate selection of interviews will reflect within one percentage point the actual proportions of U.S. residents living in different regions and community types.

Within each stratum the selection of the ultimate sampling unit (a cluster of adjacent households) is achieved by a series of steps. The cities suburbs, towns and rural areas are listed according to population size from biggest to smallest within a region and then a precise location is selected by a random pattern which guarantees a probability proportional to census estimates of the given respective household populations. The next step is to construct a detailed map of the selected locations, showing a starting point and a prescribed direction in which to proceed. Interviewers are instructed to list all households in line according to their assignment.

In essence, this procedure is designed to produce a national cross section that accurately reflects the actual population of the country 18 years of age and older living in private households. This means that the results of the survey can be projected as representative of the country's adult civilian non-institutional population. Where adjustments are necessary, a statistical system of weighting was applied to correct any imbalances. The end result is a sample which, although initially controlled only by area and by place of residence, accurately reflects age and income groups, sex, degree of education, race, religious and political preference, occupation or family status, and other demographic groupings.

This study was drawn from four national samples of 100 separate sample locations. The sample was drawn to allow analysis of the findings by three key age groups: (1) persons aged 18-54, (2) persons aged 55-64, and (3) persons aged 65 and over. An additional black national sample was used to oversample blacks 65 and over.

One national sample was utilized for a cross section of approximately 1,500 Americans 18 years of age and over. The procedure was to list 21 consecutive households in each of the 100 sample locations. Each interviewer then attempted to contact each of these 21 households. After the initial contact at each household, call-backs were continued until at least 15 interviews

had been completed out of the 21 households.) Within each contacted household, all adults (18 and over) were listed by age (in descending order) and a random selection pattern was used to select one person to be interviewed. Depending on whether the selected person was under 65 or 65 and over, the appropriate questionnaire was administered.

The three other national samples were utilized for the oversamples of persons 65 and over. The procedure here was to list 55 households in each of two national samples (200 sample locations) and 37 in one national sample (100 locations). Each interviewer then attempted to contact one person in each of these 55 (or 37) households. Up to two call-backs were made in each of the 55(37) households. Within each contacted household, a listing of all adults was gotten, but only persons 65 and over were included in the random selection pattern.

In the national sample listing 37 households per location, persons 55-64 were oversampled. In each of the contacted households where there was no person 65 and over, the random selection pattern was applied only to persons 55 to 64.

Similar to the four general national samples of the adult U.S. population, the Harris firm has developed a black national sample of 100 sample locations. This black sample was utilized to oversample blacks 65 and over. Following the procedures as outlined for the general 65 and over sample above, 17 households were listed for each of the 100 black sample points to yield an estimated 200 blacks 65 and over.

APPENDIX: III

WEIGHTING SCHEME FOR THE STUDY ON AGING

The weights used in reconstructing the universe of the U.S. population 18 years and older were derived from the probability mechanisms used in this study. There were several levels of weighting:

(1) Internal household weight: The inverse of the probability of selection of the individual within the household; that is, the weight is equal to the number of eligible adults within the household. For National Sample #1 (NS1), this is the number of adults 18 and over. For NS2 and NS4, this weight is the number of adults 65 and over. For NS6, for interviewed persons 65 and over, this weight is the number of adults 65 and over; for interviewed persons 55-64, this weight is the number of adults 55-64. For the Black National sample, this weight is the number of adults 65 and over.

(2) Refused and eligible respondents not available adjustment weight: This weight is equal to "a" divided by "b", where "a" is the number of known eligible respondents (includes completed interviews, refusals by the eligible respondent, and eligible respondents not available to be interviewed even after call-backs), and "b" is the number of completed interviews. This weight is calculated for each sample point separately and applied to all interviews from that sample point.

(3) Incomplete listing adjustment weight: This weight is equal to "c" divided by "d", where "c" is the number of assigned households to be listed per sample point (21 in NS1, 55 in NS2 and NS4, 37 in NS6, and 17 in the Black National sample), and "d" is the number of households where information about the ages of the occupants of the household was gathered. This weight is calculated for each sample point separately and applied to all interviews from that sample point.

(4) Age-sex adjustment weights: For each of the five samples, weights were applied using the 1970 Census figures as controls to adjust each sample separately for the known distribution of the age-sex groups appropriate to that sample. For NS1, these age-sex groups are breakdowns of the 18 and over population into 10-year groups. For NS2 and NS4, it is 5-year groupings of the 65-and-over population. For NS6, it is also 5-year groupings of the 65-and-over population for the 65-and-over interviews. For the 55-64 interviews in NS6 (all in households with no person 65 and over present), no special age-sex adjustments were made. For the Black National sample, the adjustment was to the age-sex distribution of blacks 65 and over in five-year groupings.

(5) Combination of sample weights: Only NS1 represents a full cross section of the U.S. population 18 and over; the other four samples represent various oversamples of portions of the total population. The first step is to add the 65-and-over samples from NS1, NS2, NS4 and NS6 after the previous weights have been applied. The next step is to combine the black 65-and-over sample from the Black National sample with the blacks 65 and over from the combined NS1, NS2, NS4, and NS6 sample, so that the ratio of blacks 65 and over/non-blacks 65 and over is kept to the known 78/922 ratio. The third step is to combine the 55-64 group from NS6 with the comparable 55-64 group from NS1 (those who are in households with no person 65 and over present in the same household), and weight the combined group so the ratio of this group to the

55-64 group in households with person(s) 65 and over is not altered (this ratio will be estimated from NS1).

The last step is to adjust the proportion of the 18-54, 45-64, and 65 and over samples so that, when combined, they are in the known proportion of 71/14/15.

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE AGING, INC.

1828 L Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT:
*THE HON. ALBERT J. ABRAMS
Albany, New York, Secretary of the Senate, State of New York

VICE PRESIDENTS:
*MOTHER M. BERNADETTE DE LOURDES, O. Carm.
Trumbull, Connecticut, Administrator, St. Joseph's Manor

VICE PRESIDENTS:
*HOBART C. JACKSON
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Executive Director, Stephen Smith Geriatric Center

*INABEL B. LINDSAY, D.S.W.
Washington, D.C.

*SIDNEY SPECTOR
Beechwood, Ohio, President, Social Development Corporation

SECRETARY:
*HUGH W. GASTON, A.I.A.
Albany, Georgia

TREASURER:
*JAMES R. GUNNING
New York, New York, Senior Vice President, Martin E. Segal Company

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
JACK OSSOFSKY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ROBERT AHRENS, *Chicago, Illinois*
Executive Director, Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens

MARGHERITTA ALLARDICE, *Detroit, Michigan*
Director, Senior Center Inc.

THE RT. REV. MSGR. JOSEPH T. ALVES, *Boston, Mass.*
Director, Family Counseling and Guidance Center

* WALTER M. BEATTIE, JR., *Syracuse, New York*
Director, All-University Gerontology Center, Syracuse University

HON. ROBERT D. BLUE, *Eagle Grove, Iowa*

ANDREW W. L. BROWN, *Detroit, Michigan*
Director, Community Services, UAW

ROBERT N. BUTLER, M.D., *Washington, D.C.*

FATHER LUCIUS F. CERVANTES, S.J., Ph.D., *St. Louis, Missouri*, St. Louis Commissioner of Aging

MARIA DEL PILAR CHRISTIAN, *Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico*
Associate Professor, Occupational Therapy, University of Puerto Rico

RHEA M. ECKEL CLARK, *Albany, New York*
Director, New York State Office for the Aging

IRENE CUCH, *Fort Duchesne, Utah*
Member, Tribal Business Committee, Ute Indian Tribe

MICHAEL DACSO, M.D., *New York, New York*
Medical Director, Daughters of Jacob Geriatric Center

ALVIN M. DAVID, *Ellicott City, Md.*

THE REV. DR. LOWELL R. DITZEN, *Washington, D.C.*

HUGH DOWNS, *Carefree, Arizona*
Author, Lecturer, TV Commentator

KATHERINE DUNHAM, *East St. Louis, Illinois*
Professor and Director, Performing Arts Training Center, Southern Illinois University

GILBERT EDWARDS, *Ft. Lauderdale, Florida*
President, Human Resources Foundation

EVELYN H. FORMAN, *New Rochelle, New York*

GUY FRAZIER, *Beaverton, Oregon*
Director of Personnel, Tektronix, Inc.

F. D. GASSAWAY, M.D., *Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*
Medical Director, Gulf Oil Corporation

IRA L. GIBBONS, D.S.W., *Washington, D.C.*

HAROLD M. GOWING, *Portland, Oregon*

COL. ROBERT W. GUNTHER, USAF (Ret.), *Millbrook, New York*

PAUL HABER, M.D., *Washington, D.C.*
Deputy Assistant Chief Medical Director for Professional Services, Veterans Administration

RAYMOND HARRIS, M.D., *Albany, New York*
Chief, Cardiovascular Medicine, St. Peter's Hospital

ROBERT J. HAVIGHURST, Ph.D., *Chicago, Illinois*
Professor of Education and Human Development, The University of Chicago

EDMUND P. HENNELLY, *New York, New York*
Manager, Government Relations, Mobil Oil Corporation

G. WARFIELD HOBBS, III, *Stonington, Connecticut*
President Emeritus, National Council on the Aging

* LOWELL IBERG, *New York, New York*
Deputy Director, State Communities Aid Association

MAURICE JACKSON, Ph.D., *Riverside, California*
Associate Professor, Dept. of Sociology, University of California, Riverside

GUY JUSTIS, *Chicago, Illinois*

JUANITA M. KREPS, Ph.D., *Durham, North Carolina*
Dean, Women's College, Duke University

KARL R. KUNZE, *Oxnard, California*
Kunze Associates

GERALD D. LaVECK, M.D., *Seattle, Washington*
Professor, Dept. of Epidemiology and International Health, School of Public Health, Seattle

GENERAL JOHN F. McMAHON, *New York, New York*
Commander-in-Chief, National Society of the Volunteers of America

PETER MEEK, *Ridgewood, New Jersey*

* GARSON MEYER, *Rochester, New York*
President Emeritus, National Council on the Aging

ALEXANDER MONRO, *Indianapolis, Indiana*
Assistant Director for Planning, Training and Evaluation, Central Indiana Council on Aging

* JOHN W. MOORE, JR., *Waterbury, Connecticut*
Vice President, Employee Relations, Scovill Manufacturing Company

JAMES C. O'BRIEN, *Washington, D.C.*

LEO PERLIS, *Washington, D.C.*
Director, Department of Community Services, AFL-CIO

* WILLIAM R. POTHIER, *San Francisco, California*
Executive Director, San Francisco Senior Center

* OLLIE A. RANDALL, *New York, New York*

ROBERT B. ROBINSON, *Denver, Colorado*
Director, Division of Services for the Aging, Colorado Commission on Aging

DAVID G. SALTEN, Ph.D., *New York, New York*
Vice President and Provost, New York Institute of Technology

THE REV. RUDY SANCHEZ, *Dallas, Texas*
First Mexican Baptist Church

ROGER SANDOVAL, *Fort Defiance, Arizona*
Director, Tribal Community Development Program, Navajo Tribe

HARRIS T. SCHRANK, *New York, New York*
Director, Office of Social Research, The Equitable Assurance Society of the United States

HON. MARGARET C. SCHWEINHAUT, *Kensington, Maryland*
Chairperson, Maryland Commission on the Aging

HON. MILTON J. SHAPP, *Harrisburg, Pennsylvania*
Governor, The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

EDWIN F. SHELLEY, *New York, New York*
Chairman, E. F. Shelley & Co., Inc.

HAROLD L. SHEPPARD, Ph.D., *Washington, D.C.*
Staff Social Scientist, W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research

MARGARET TISHMAN, *New York, New York*
Vice President, Federation of Jewish Philanthropies

PETE VILLA, *Phoenix, Arizona*

CLIFFORD WHITING, *Albuquerque, New Mexico*
Chairperson, New Mexico Commission on Aging

TAFFY WILBER, *St. Louis, Missouri*
President, Taffy Wilber and Associates, Inc.

HERBERT WILTSEE, *Atlanta, Georgia*
Director, Southern Office Council of State Governments

ELLEN WINSTON, Ph.D., *Raleigh, North Carolina*
President, National Council of Homemaker-Home Health Aide Services, Inc.

* Executive Committee Members